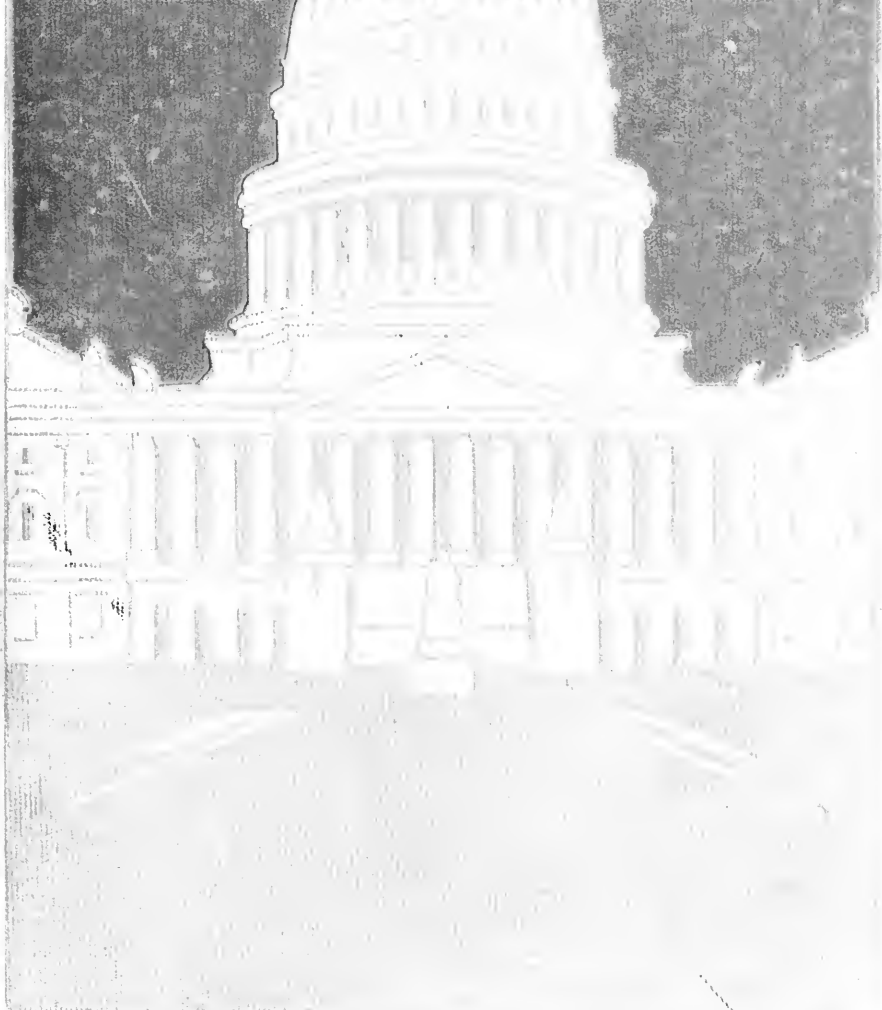


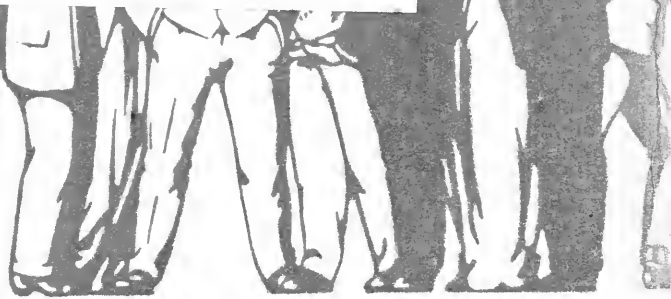
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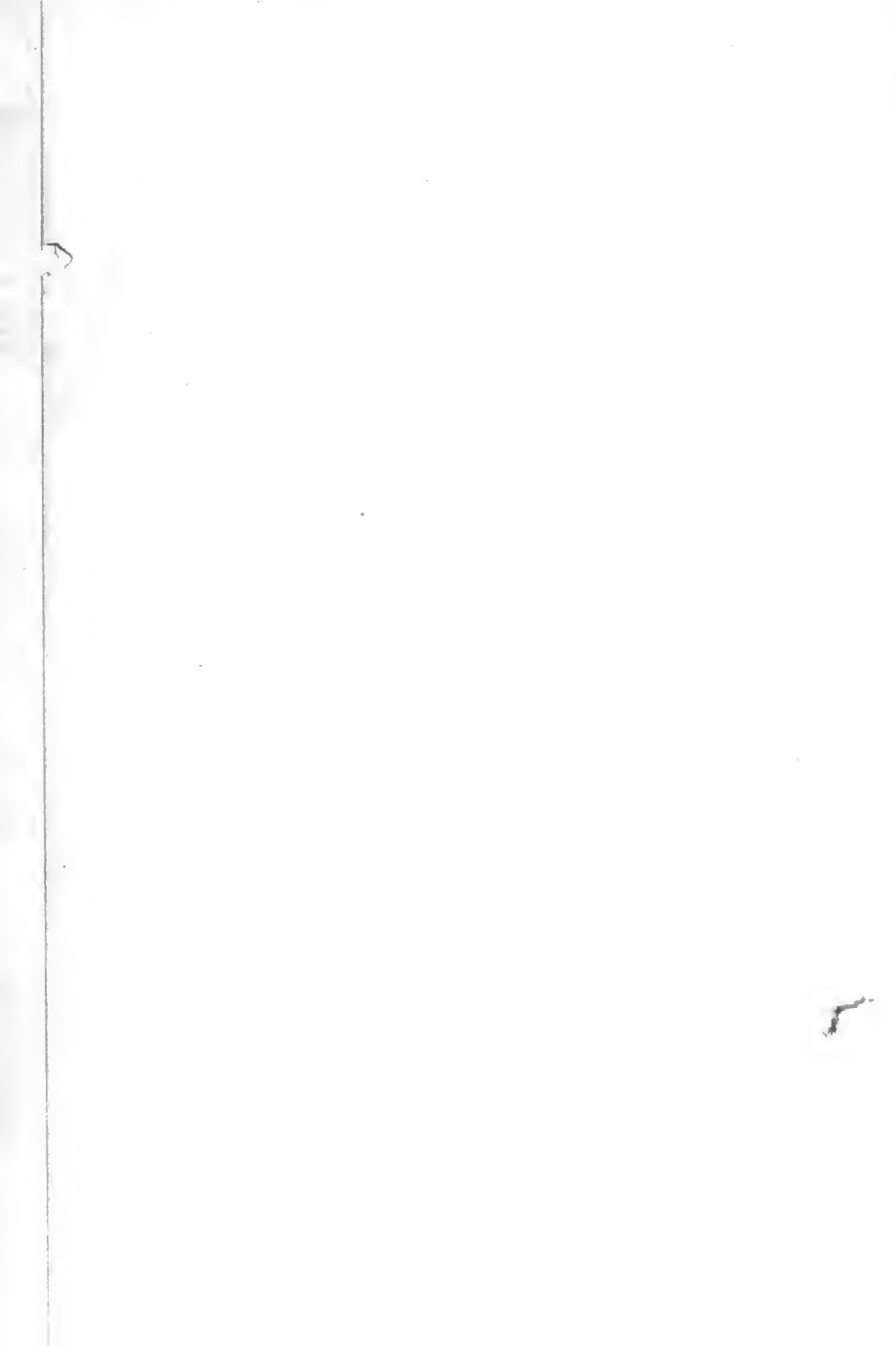


BEN B. LINDSEY



THE PRICE OF PLACE





The Price of Place

BY
SAMUEL G. BLYTHE

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THE PRICE OF PLACE

The Price of Place

I

“PLAY THE GAME”

“**H**OW does it look, Charley?” Bob McManus asked, leaning over the table where Charley Caulkins was figuring the percentages on the election returns coming in over the wire.

“All right,” Caulkins answered rather gruffly, for it was the one time in the year when he could be gruff with the boss. On all other occasions Caulkins was an obsequious assistant cashier in the First National Bank of Morganville. On election nights he was the indispensable man who could handle the returns quickly and accurately, and who could get the ratios of gain or loss before the others had the figures written down. Every county seat has a Caulkins.

Bob McManus was vitally interested in this election. He was the Republican boss of Green-

field County. His influence extended out into the district and he dominated some of the other counties also. He was a contractor and real-estate dealer, who couldn't be elected to an office himself because of a general distrust of his methods and morals; but no candidate could be elected without the support of McManus and his organisation. McManus would have given half his fortune for popular recognition in the way of an elective office, but he knew what would happen to him if he went before the people. So he bossed the organisation, dictated the nominations, and took his preferment in the way of appointive offices and receiverships and other patronage distributed by the bigger bosses of the state and nation.

"Give us the dope," he insisted.

"Well," said Caulkins, "listen to this: 'Lincoln County, with twenty precincts missing, gives Marsh 2245 and Bolus 1762. Same precincts two years ago gave Hawkins 1936 and Bolus 1834.'"

"It's a cinch," commented McManus, "for Grant and Sheridan and Colby will do as well."

"Don't be too sure," cautioned Caulkins. "Two years ago we thought it was a pipe, and Bolus nosed in."

That was the fact. After remaining steadfastly Republican, so far as its representation in Congress went, for twenty years, the fifteenth district suddenly became Democratic. Judge William Godfrey Bolus, a Democrat, defeated Colonel Charles P. Hawkins, an old soldier and a repre-

sentative for six terms, who was beginning to think there was something in the Constitution that gave him his place. It was one of those odd political shifts that come now and then, and are mainly the result of a protest against local conditions or of a wider revolt against party domination or party crimes. The fifteenth district was normally Republican by about twelve hundred votes. McManus, in a desperate effort to regain control, had selected and nominated James Marsh, a Morganville lawyer, to make the fight against Bolus. Marsh was his strongest man.

The telegraph instrument clicked ceaselessly. Tom Johnson, the operator, who was taking the returns over the loop the telegraph company had run into the back room of the country headquarters — McManus' room — handed Caulkins another bulletin.

“It's getting where it was four years ago,” announced Caulkins. “The north towns are doing well and Grant and Colby are holding strong.”

“What's the percentage?” asked McManus.

“It's a gain of about forty to the precinct for Marsh,” Caulkins replied. “That'll pull him through.”

The headquarters were on the second floor of the Bixby block on the main street of Morganville. Most of the members of the county committee, a few of the candidates and some of the party leaders had gathered in the inner office. The big room outside was crowded with men who

were politicians, men who thought they were politicians, party workers, district leaders, precinct captains, and a large number of citizens who were interested in the outcome of the voting. All of them were smoking, and most of them smoked bad cigars. The air was thick and heavy, the men jostled back and forth, talking, commenting, loudly proclaiming their foreknowledge of what had happened. Each man exalted his political prescience, and listened impatiently to claims made by others of expert analyses of conditions weeks before the test. Each man desired to get credit for wisdom, to boast of it, and they all chattered and bragged and assumed self-satisfied poses and nodded sagely when the bulletins were read. Not a man was in the place, apparently, who had not known weeks beforehand what the result would be.

After Caulkins had finished with the bulletins he handed them to Jack Merrit, the secretary of the committee, who hastened to declaim the news to the crowd. Every time Merrit appeared in the doorway between the inner office and the room outside there was an instant hush. He rasped off the returns in a harsh voice and dodged back, and the place immediately became clamorous with loud comment on the results that had been communicated. There were many amateur figurers out there, but they were not expert enough to have a percentage before Merrit appeared again and upset all their calculations with his fresh batch of information.

At ten o'clock the complete returns from Grant and Colby counties were in. McManus sat down and wrote a telegram to the state chairman saying Marsh was elected, and another to the leading Republican paper in the city fifty miles away which said: "Robert H. McManus, the Republican leader of the fifteenth district, claims the election of James Marsh to Congress by eight hundred plurality."

"It'll be a thousand," said Caulkins.

"Oh, well," McManus replied, "that will make it all the better for another dispatch later on."

Jack Merrit read the leader's dispatch to the crowd outside. There was some cheering. Most of those in the big room began to move toward the door.

"Hold on!" ordered a big red-faced man who had been loud in his praise of his own prognostications. "What's the yank? Where's Marsh?"

"That's so," said another in the crowd. "Where is Marsh?"

"Marsh!" they shouted. "Come on out, Jim, and let's see you."

"Marsh!"

"Hey, Jim, don't be so bashful!"

"Speech!"

"Speech!"

"Come on, Jim; you ain't an honorable yet and can afford to associate with us for a while."

McManus turned to a man of forty who had been moving about the inner room since early in

the evening, chewing a cigar which he lighted and nervously relighted and then as nervously neglected to keep lighted; a man of good stature, with a broad spread of shoulder, about twenty pounds too much weight round the paunch, which showed, even under the protecting shadow of his deep chest, a clean-shaven face, heavy lips, large eyes set far apart beneath a high and broad forehead, and a great quantity of thick, black hair, that was brushed straight back and was worn long behind. He was an average man, as men go, with no marked characteristic, facial or otherwise, until he smiled. Then he seemed to be exceedingly good-natured and his face lighted up pleasantly.

"Go ahead, Jim," said McManus. "Go out there and make a talk to that gang or they'll never go home."

"All right," Marsh assented, and he threw away his soggy cigar and went into the other room.

"'Rah for Marsh!" a few shouted. Others clapped their hands. They all turned toward the doorway where Marsh was standing.

"My friends," Marsh began, "I —"

"Git up on a chair!" the red-faced man yelled.

Marsh obediently clambered on a chair. He held up his hand for quiet after the manner of the stump speaker, and began again: "My friends —"

"Good boy, Jim!" shouted an enthusiast. "I knew you'd skin 'em."

“My friends —”

“‘Rah for Jim Marsh, next congressman from the good old fifteenth!” came from the rear of the room.

“Aw, dry up!” commanded a patriot who was eager to hear. “Lettim talk.”

“Spit it out, Jim!”

“Go to it!”

“My friends,” began Marsh again, smiling down at the crowded room, “there isn’t much a man can say on an occasion like this, except to express his thanks to those who stood by him so loyally in the fight that has resulted in this great victory for our party. And I do thank you, thank you all from my heart, for your support —”

“Good boy, Jim!”

“— For your support, not only at the polls, but during the hard campaign we had to make to wrest the old fifteenth from the control of the enemy. You have imposed a sacred trust in me. You are sending me to Washington to take part in the deliberations of Congress, and I want to pledge you here again, as I have done on the stump, that your confidence in me shall not be misplaced, and that I shall work with an eye and a heart and a hand single to your interests and to the interests of the Grand Old Party which we all love so well.”

“That’s the stuff, Jim! That’s the pure quill!”

“Once again the good old fifteenth will be represented in the Halls of Congress by a Republican

— a real Republican — you know the kind of a Republican I am, boys? ”

“ Bet your life we do, Jim! Whoop’er up! ”

“ And here and now I say to you that never shall I be ungrateful for the honour you have bestowed on me and never shall I prove unfaithful to my trust. I thank you again; I need say no more at this time. You are all my friends and I want to shake hands with you before you go, and express to you personally the deep and abiding gratitude I feel to you all. You represent the people — you are the people — and the rights of the people shall ever be my first concern.”

“ How about Bob McManus? ” shouted a thin-whiskered man who viewed the proceedings with evident disapproval.

“ The Honorable Robert H. McManus is my friend, and I would be an ingrate indeed if I did not acknowledge that here and my indebtedness to him and to his great organisation for their part in this victory. I feel that I am merely the instrument of the expressed will of the people — ”

“ And Bob McManus! ” interjected the thin-whiskered man.

“ Aw, cut it out! ” cautioned the red-faced patriot.

“ — Merely an instrument for the expression of the will of the people in governmental affairs, but for all that I allow no man to question my fealty of Bob McManus, who labored so earnestly and so unselfishly in my behalf. Again from the bottom of my heart I thank you.”

McManus had entered the room. After Marsh had finished he moved up to where Marsh was standing and whispered: “Slough ’em off as quick as you can. I want to have a talk with you before you go home.”

Marsh shook hands rapidly and received congratulations modestly. After the last man had filed past him he returned to the inner room. The floor was littered with paper containing the calculations of Caulkins and with crumpled bulletins. The telegraph instrument was clicking spasmodically. The air was murky with ill-smelling smoke. Caulkins and a few others lingered, talking it over with that curious insistence of repetition of established fact that marks such conversations, saying the same things again and again and assuring one another they had known all along that it would be a walk-over.

“Boys,” said McManus, “Jim and I want to have a talk. Good-night.”

Everybody left but Caulkins. “Say, Bob,” he said, “don’t forget about making our bank a national depository. Old Bolus got the treasurer to take it away from us when he went in.”

“I won’t,” McManus replied. “Good-night, Charley; much obliged.”

Caulkins fiddled round, loath to go. It was his one important night in the year.

“Good-night, Charley,” said McManus again with abrupt finality.

“Good-night, Bob; good-night, Jim. Don’t

forget about that depository business. Good-night." And he left slowly.

"Sit down," ordered McManus.

Marsh sat down in the chair Caulkins had occupied and twisted some sheets of yellow flimsy between his fingers.

"Jim," said McManus, "you know who elected you, don't you?"

"You did."

"Sure! I was afraid you might forget it. And you know who can beat you next time if you don't play ball, don't you?"

"I suppose you can."

"No supposing about it; I can — and I will, too, if it seems necessary. Now I want to get down to brass tacks to you."

"Go ahead."

"First, I'll tell you a few things about yourself. You are forty-one years old, right in your prime, and you've wanted to go to Congress for the last six or seven years. I've been watching you, and I picked you this time because I figured that you and I could form a partnership and hold things in this district for a good long time. You've got things I need and I've got a whole heap you need, and we can do business together or not as you choose."

"I'll do anything I can, Bob."

"All right. Now, then, the reason I picked you to go to Congress is because you are a good lawyer, one of the strongest in the district, and because you are far-and-away the best speaker in this

part of the state. With a few years in Congress and the experience and training you get there, I can make you a big man, and perhaps get you the governorship or send you to the United States Senate."

"Do you think so, Bob?" asked Marsh, leaning forward and putting his hand on McManus' knee.

"Sure! Besides, your wife is ambitious, and you've got a daughter that'll be a crackerjack, and maybe she's ambitious too. All you have to do, Jim, is to remember where your obligation lies, and not try to doublecross me or your friends here, or get the swelled head and think you're a bigger man politically than I am, and you'll be all right."

"What do you want me to do?"

McManus got up and walked over to the window. He looked out for a moment, lighted a cigar carefully, took a puff or two and then walked back to where Marsh was sitting on the edge of his chair.

"What do I want you to do? Nothing on God's green earth but to play the game. There are a lot of busy-izzy reformers and disturbers in this district, and they will try to get you. They will appeal to your so-called patriotism and your love of country and your deep affection for the common people; but forget it—forget it all. Politics isn't the business of the people. It's a business we pursue for the people—and ourselves. It's the most selfish, the most heartless, the most bogus business on the footstool, but it

happens to be the kind of business I enjoy, and you can add to my enjoyment of it by doing what I want you to, and add to your own enjoyment too."

"But the better element were all for me, Bob."

"Forget the better element! What have we to do with them now that we have their votes? Forget reformers who want you and me to do what they want us to do instead of doing what the situation demands. A reformer is nothing but a man who can't get what he wants regularly and tries to get it irregularly, or in a new way. A reformer is a man who has a grievance and wants to plaster everybody else with that grievance. Or he is one of those exalted idiots who thinks because he doesn't approve of a man, or a method, or a manner, that it is the duty of everybody else to disapprove of it. These reformers are the greatest egotists in the world. They won't argue. They won't reason. They just condemn and command."

"But they cast a lot of votes."

"Of course they do, and we have to cater to them. I'm not asking you to do anything out in the open they object to, for I've made it a rule in politics to favour, in public, every movement that is advocated by church people or the women."

He laughed. "What I have done in private is another matter."

"But," asked Marsh, "what shall you want?"

"Nothing, Jim," said McManus, putting his hand on Marsh's shoulder, "nothing at all but

one thing. All I ask of you is to play the game."

"That's easy enough."

"It won't be so easy as you think, but if you've got the nerve and the savvy — and I think you have — to play it the way it ought to be played, you and I can get to be the big political powers in this state. I tell you I can make you governor or senator or perhaps president. But that isn't all."

"It seems a good deal." Marsh's eyes burned with excitement.

"It isn't all by a heap. The most important thing is this, Jim — we can both make our fortunes."

"Hold on, Bob!" broke in Marsh. "You can't make a crook out of me or a grafter."

"Who the hell wants you to be a crook or a grafter?" snarled McManus. "If you go to be a crook or a grafter you couldn't get anywhere — provided it was found out or suspected even. Now listen to me: You are ambitious?"

"Yes."

"You think you have it in you to be a big man in Congress."

"I do."

"You'd rather be a great senator and have your wife succeed socially than anything else?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, I know you have the right stuff in you and all I ask of you is to play the game."

"But," asked Marsh nervously, "how shall I know what the game is and how to play it?"

“Oh,” replied McManus, as if it were all settled, “as for that you’ll learn a good deal yourself, and what you don’t learn yourself I’ll teach you.”

II

THE FUTURE OPENS

MARSH walked home slowly, turning over in his mind what McManus had said to him. He was uneasy, for he didn't know how far McManus would ask him to go. McManus had financial and political connections in the East, was frequently called to Washington for consultation with the party leaders there, was a member of the Republican National Committee and potent in state affairs. Furthermore McManus, operating as the friend of the people and the unselfish leader of the party, looked on it all as a game whereby the ends always justified the means. He was interested only in the results and the results of the results, which, generally, and as often as he could make them so, were for the benefit of McManus and his lieutenants. He was a stern boss, but had the reputation of dividing equitably, and he stood by his friends. Marsh understood perfectly that McManus' only theory of politics was that politics is necessary to secure power and that power is useful in helping along personal plans.

At the same time Marsh knew it would be to the advantage of his future to remain on friendly

terms with McManus, for without McManus' support Marsh could not hope to remain in Congress. Marsh took a backward look at his own career. He was forty-one years old, married and had a daughter of fifteen. He was a practising lawyer, who made about six thousand dollars a year and had never had an office except a street-railway receivership, given to him by a political judge, that netted him five thousand dollars, of which he was compelled to give a quarter to the McManus organisation. He was born in a small village about twenty miles from Morganville, worked hard, came to Morganville when he was eighteen and studied law. He passed his examinations with credit and took a clerkship in a leading firm at that, the county seat. After a few years he had opened an office of his own and had done well, as the law business went in that territory. All his life he had been a public speaker and interested and active in politics. He had an elocutionary gift. When he was a small boy he declaimed Spartacus to the Gladiators and similar robust orations in the district school. He worked up through the rural debating societies and was a leader in the moot trials organised by the clerks in his student days. As soon as he was admitted to the bar he began campaign speaking in a small way. He had developed, through his work in the courtroom and on the stump, into an effective public speaker, with a facility for flowery and impassioned perorations and a trick of alliteration that made his

speeches sound more impressive than they really were. His voice was musical and strong and his delivery graceful and at times dramatic.

He was a good student, kept in close and intelligent touch with public affairs. Once or twice when the occasion seemed opportune, he had broken away from the McManus organisation and had sided with the independents. There always was a faction in the district fighting McManus. This exhibition of independence had puzzled McManus, but had not deterred him from nominating Marsh when he wanted a man to win. McManus needed Marsh, not only to give respectability to his organisation, but because Marsh was strong and effective and capable of large development. Marsh had not been, to a great extent, cognisant of the machine methods of McManus, for McManus had used him for outside work and not in the inner councils. Marsh thoroughly believed that his triumph at the polls was due to his own good standing in the community and to his strong political beliefs, which, though generally in accord with those of the party, still were progressive enough to suit the independents in a great measure.

He liked the law, but his great love was for politics and his great passion for power and place. All his life he had had but one idea, and that was to become an important man in the country. He thought himself a great orator — and he was a very good one and might reasonably hope to develop in time to be a great one — and he was

greedy for applause. He had visions of himself in Congress swaying his colleagues with the force and eloquence of his words, and he saw opening before him vistas, not only of political triumphs but of social triumphs as well. He considered the man who held a big office as having proved his superiority over his neighbours; and though he was outwardly modest and not looking for notoriety, he sought the society of men he thought could help him, and saw to it that his name was in the newspapers as often as it could be put there in a complimentary manner. He had worked harder to make himself one of the big men of Morganville than he had to make money, and he had lived up to and a little beyond his income. Ordinarily at the end of the year there were bills amounting to a thousand dollars or so unpaid, and no way to provide for them except by future earnings.

Marsh was somewhat of a sentimentalist, and by nature not so aggressive as he seemed. However, he had carefully built up a reputation for keen, businesslike decision, which he relieved at times by some act of kindness and consideration that won him approval. He was liked by his colleagues at the bar and popular throughout his district as a good mixer. He had a facility for remembering names and faces and incidents, and he cultivated that assiduously. He also had a hearty sincerity of manner, never effusive, but genuine in all its manifestations. To all outside views he seemed a serious, studious, earnest,

honest man, with the good of the people at heart and fervent in his support of his party. He was enough of a politician to go a considerable distance in making his own ideas conform with the tenets of his party. He said to himself that he could do more to bring about good politics by being in powerful place on the inside instead of fighting from the outside. He was firmly determined to urge and secure reforms, especially in the extension of popular government, a question he had studied much but about which he had talked little. He had no idea, either real or vague, of doing anything else in Congress than giving his best service to his people and his country, but back of it all was an intense ambition, a craving for high position, and he was certain that if he could attain the place he desired he then could do many things that were beyond him as a private citizen.

Marsh had telephoned the result to his wife as soon as he was certain he was elected, and she was waiting for him.

"Well, Molly," he shouted exultantly as he came into the living-room where she was sitting, "we're going to Congress."

She rose to meet him and he took her in his arms and kissed her. She said nothing.

"You don't seem very much impressed with the news," he complained.

"Of course I am, Jim. Don't be silly! But I was planning my dresses."

"Your dresses! Is that the first thing you think about?"

"Jim," said Mrs. Marsh, withdrawing herself from his arms, "I am now a Congressman's wife, and I shall be expected to take my proper place in society in Washington. Of course I must think of my dresses and the dresses for Dorothy, but I'm glad — I'm glad — it means so much to all of us."

Mrs Marsh was slender, alert and thirty-seven. She had an attractive face, knew how to keep her complexion fresh, had good taste in gowns and much tact and ability as a hostess. She was not a beauty and never had been, but she was graceful, vivacious, healthy, good-tempered, active, and had won her way as the social leader of her set by hard and persistent campaigning and by the exercise of great strategy and diplomacy. She had a quick mind, was just a little ahead of her friends in adopting the new fashions, but had excellent discernment and never took up the extreme modes. She was adaptable and eager to learn, and studied the social columns of the out-of-town newspapers and the fashion books from New York and elsewhere with satisfactory results. She dabbled discreetly in club doings, but never with any but the clubs that were most fashionable, and she kept her visiting list carefully pruned, and considered it a triumph when she added to that list the name of a lady who had seemed a little above her in position. She was the daughter of a local merchant, and had married Marsh

when she was nineteen, a year after she had completed her course in the Morganville high school.

"Molly," said Marsh, "this dress business is an angle that hadn't appealed to me before. How much will they cost?"

"Why, Jim," she replied, "I don't know. How can I tell? I suppose five hundred dollars for myself and Dorothy."

"Five hundred dollars!"

"Certainly! You want your wife to be properly dressed, don't you? There is so much to get, for none of the gowns I have been wearing here will do. I must have everything new. You know, Jim," she continued earnestly, "it wouldn't do to go to one of those big houses in Washington with a gown on that had seen service here in poky Morganville."

"I suppose not."

"You aren't very enthusiastic about it."

"Maybe not; but this campaign cost me about all I had in cash and I went into debt some. They taxed me pretty heavily and I had to pay my own expenses. Why, the money McManus got from the congressional campaign committee he used in his own way, and I'm about strapped, to tell the truth."

"Oh, well, we don't go to Washington until December of next year, and you can make a lot before that time, can't you, Jim?"

"I'll have to," he replied grimly.

III

THE FIRST: "WHY NOT?"

LEADER McMANUS took Marsh to Washington with him for a few days during the session of the Congress which preceded the body to which Marsh had been elected. Corrected returns showed that Marsh had carried his district by some thirteen hundred, "redeemed" it, as the party papers all said, and he had made one or two speeches at ratification meetings that had been warmly commended. McManus had said little and had kept away from Marsh, who was working hard at his law practice and reading up on governmental affairs, in order to be able to plunge into his new work. He was disturbed because he would have no actual opportunity, beyond being representative-elect, to demonstrate his capacity as a statesman, as the Congress to which he was elected would not go into session for a year; but he finally concluded that might not be so much of a detriment as it seemed, for the elapsed time would give him a chance to get his law business into shape and secure some money to help out on expenses in Washington.

It was the second time Marsh had been in Washington. He had attended the inauguration of President Harrison, in 1889, coming on an excursion, and had galloped through the big buildings and had called on his representative; but he remembered very little except the crowds and the rain, and he was vastly interested in all he saw. They went to the largest hotel, where McManus took a parlour and two bedrooms, a finer suite than Marsh ever had occupied in a hotel or elsewhere, and began a round of visits. McManus spent money freely. He hired cabs, had elaborate dinners, bought expensive wines and cigars and would not let Marsh pay for anything.

"It's on me," he said, "all of it. I want to get you started right down here, and there's no sense in your blowing yourself. It's on me."

Marsh resented this air of proprietorship shown by McManus, and he resented it still more when he was introduced by McManus as "my congressman," but he said nothing. He resolved at the earliest feasible moment to show McManus he was his own congressman, but he went with McManus wherever McManus suggested. Marsh was surprised to see the easy terms McManus was on with men whose names figured in the newspapers every day as the greatest statesmen of the country. He heard McManus call them "Joe" and "John" and all the rest, and saw them salute McManus as "Bob, old boy!" and at once become confidential with him. He

waited impatiently in outside offices while McManus talked with famous senators and notable representatives, and when they went to the White House and he was presented to the president, he was astonished to find the president not only called McManus "Bob," but put his arm about his shoulder and led him away to a corner of the room for a personal and intimate talk.

Marsh's vanity was hurt. He considered himself a man of considerable dignity and consequence, and he was a representative-elect, a man on whom they must all figure when the next Congress convened. To his disgust he was received in the most casual manner by the leaders of his party in both Senate and House. They were glad to meet him, inquired carefully as to his name, said they would be pleased to help him when he came to take up his duties, and then turned to other things. A few of them talked to him a little about politics in his state, but that was about all. Every one seemed to have confidences to exchange with McManus and Marsh obtained a new view of the power of that leader in national affairs. McManus took him to the man who would be speaker of the new House and recommended Marsh for good committee places.

"I'll do the best I can," said that personage, "but the pressure is tremendous. All the new men want to go on Ways and Means or Appropriations, you understand, right off the bat."

"I know all about that," McManus replied,

"but you take care of Marsh here. He's all right, and he'll stand without hitching."

Marsh resented that, too, but said nothing. In his mind he determined not only to show the prospective speaker that he might do worse than put him in Ways and Means or Appropriations, but also to prove to McManus there was no mortgage on his freedom in the possession of that autocratic boss.

It was all an enchanted land to Marsh. By virtue of his forthcoming position he was admitted to places beyond the ordinary visitor. He saw at closer range the men he had been reading about all his life. He studied the operations of both Senate and House, listened to the debates and speeches and said to himself that he could do better than any of them, went to a dinner party or two given at the hotel by McManus, and was seized with a sense of his own importance. In a short time he was to be a member of this great law-making body. He was to be a statesman. He was to have his place there on the floor, to take part in the deliberations, to help frame the laws, to speak to an audience that would be nationwide, and he saw again those vistas of increasing power and higher place. Indeed, one night when he was out alone for a walk, he went up on Pennsylvania Avenue past the treasury, and stood for a long time looking at the White House. Then he walked slowly round the ellipse and gazed at the big portico, and staring over the iron fence he

determined that even so tremendous a goal as the White House was not beyond him.

"Why not?" he said. "Why not?"

As he stood there three men came along, walking slowly and talking earnestly. He recognised two of them. They were senators, he was sure of that, and well-known senators, too. He had often seen their pictures in the papers and he had observed them on the floor of the Senate chamber.

They stopped near him.

"Damn him! If he thinks he can coerce me into doing what he wants by threatening to withhold my patronage, let him go ahead," one of them exclaimed. "I'm still a senator, and I'll show him that I'm not to be intimidated by any president of the United States."

"Cheer up, Bill!" said another of the party. "He's only bluffing and so are you. When the time comes you'll get together in five minutes."

"I'm not bluffing!" shouted the angry senator. "I'll show him."

The others laughed and pulled the fist-shaker along with them, patting him on the back and telling him it was a waste of energy to make those demonstrations before them.

Marsh wondered what it was all about. He had heard nothing of any quarrel between a senator and the president. When he returned to the hotel he asked McManus about it.

"Oh," said McManus, "it's nothing. The president wants a thing done that is pretty hard to do, and some of the senators have kicked about

it. He is insistent and is threatening to withhold patronage unless he gets his way. Those old boys over there in the Senate are as greedy as any politician for their share of the pie, and they're sore. But they will come round. They always do. By the way, I fixed it for you to-day so you can have a couple of assistant door-keepers and a place on the temporary roll for our fellows."

"I'll look over the ground," said Marsh, "and pick out some good men."

"Needn't bother," McManus replied. "I've picked them out for you."

This made Marsh's gorge rise. He was on the point of protesting, but he thought it better to wait until he had a chance to show McManus by deeds instead of trying to influence him by words. McManus apparently considered the matter settled and did not refer to it again.

"Bob," said Marsh, as they were on the train going home, "you seem to know most of the big men back in Washington."

"Yes."

"And to have a lot of influence with them."

"I do."

McManus turned and looked Marsh in the eye: "Why not?" he asked. "Why not, when I've been playing the game on the level with most of them for thirty years? I know them and they know me."

"But you never have taken office."

"Marsh," said McManus, leaning forward, "there is one good rule you always should follow

—never try to take anything you can't get. I couldn't be elected pound-master, and you know it; but I can elect other people, and you know that too. Besides, I'd much rather own an office-holder than have an office own me."

There was a pause of ten minutes. McManus smoked his cigar and looked out of the window. Marsh smoked his cigar and looked at the toes of his shoes.

"Bob," asked Marsh finally, "do you claim to own me?"

"I make no claims of any kind," McManus replied, with considerable emphasis. "I took you to Washington to show you what I can do for you if you continue right. It's all up to you. If you want my support you can have it. If you don't want it that's for you to decide. But let me say this — you can't get anywhere without me and you can go a hell of a ways with me. All you've got to do is to play the game."

"Do you mean you want me to be dishonest?"

"Dishonest!" shouted McManus. "No, I don't want you to be dishonest! What good would you be to me or anybody else if you were dishonest in the sense you use the word? I'm not putting crooks into office; I'm trying to keep them out. You've been listening to a lot of guff about politics and politicians put out by a bunch of reformers and uplifters who wouldn't know an Australian ballot if they saw one coming down the street and wouldn't know whether they ought to back in or roll into a polling place, who never

took part in a ward caucus, and who say all politics is dishonest because they can't get out of politics what they want themselves.

"No, I don't want you to be dishonest. I'll be the first to expose you if you are. What I do want is for you to look at this game with the right slant. I don't like that word graft a little bit, but it's the only one I can use to explain what I do mean. Now listen, Marsh, there are two kinds of graft—plain graft and honest graft. Perquisites is better, but that doesn't exactly fit. What I mean is that if you play the game, go to bat with the boys who are in control and prove yourself regular and dependable, you will get your share of it and, incidentally, so will I. There are a whole heap of things coming off every session of Congress that are straight as a string, and you can get in on them if you will. It doesn't mean any betrayal of your constituents, or any sacrifice of your honor, or anything at all but just plain, hard, common sense, and not such a hell of a lot of that. If you play ball with the boys the boys will play ball with you. Our Congress is the greatest tit-for-tat institution in the known world. The organisation runs the game, and if you are with the organisation you are in the game and get your share. If you try to buck the organisation you lose out three ways—at home, in Congress and with me. You won't be asked to do anything you can't do consistently or conscientiously, unless your conscience is tenderer than I think it is. The labourer is always worthy

of his hire. Things will come your way if you help put things in the way of the other fellows. It's a give-and-take proposition anyway you look at it, and you've got to give something before you can take anything."

"But, Bob, I don't quite get what you mean by honest graft."

"You don't have to — yet," said McManus. "But when the time comes I'll be round to put you wise."

IV

ANOTHER RUBE CONGRESSMAN

THE Honorable James Marsh and Mrs. Marsh came to Washington ten days before the session of Congress began in December. They decided to leave Dorothy, the daughter, with her grandmother in Morganville so that she might continue at school, and planned to go to a hotel for a time until they could fit themselves into the life at the capital in their proper sphere. Marsh knew no hotel except the one he had stayed at with McManus, and he went there. He asked for a parlour, a bedroom and a bath, and was given a small suite on the seventh floor overlooking the roofs of some adjacent buildings. The rooms were comfortable and the service excellent. Mrs. Marsh was delighted.

That afternoon she put on one of her prettiest gowns and went down early. She had seen a long hall, or corridor, rather, bisecting the hotel, and had observed this was lined with sofas and big carved and padded chairs. There were great parlours and restaurant rooms on either side of this corridor, which were decorated lavishly with

palms and flowering shrubs and potted plants. At five o'clock the waiters put small tables along this corridor, and dozens of handsomely dressed women came in to have tea. A big orchestra played in a balcony. There was much bustle and animation, and the women visited from table to table, while men walked through, stopped here and there to chat or lingered long enough for a cup of tea. She observed that some of the women were old and elaborately dressed and that some of them were young and still more elaborately dressed. She walked through the corridor, noticed that some of the men glanced at her momentarily and then took a seat to watch the proceedings.

It was a lively and interesting scene. The orchestra played unceasingly, devoting itself to the popular airs of the day, and the women came and went in groups of two and three and four. She sat for an hour, thinking pleasantly of the coming afternoons when she would be of the party, and not merely in it as she was then, a participator and not a spectator, but she was uneasy about her dress. It was the ultimate achievement of the local dressmaker at Morganville, but she did not see any other like it. To be sure, she had gone to the modiste in the city for her evening gowns, but this frock was her idea of what she would need in her afternoon social duties, and she was worried, and wondered if it were possible that she was not so strictly in the fashion as she had thought to be. Soon after six o'clock she went up to the suite. Marsh came in. She decided she would put on

her simplest evening gown and insisted that Marsh should wear his dinner jacket.

"What's the use?" asked Marsh. "I'm tired. Let's go down just as we are and get a bite."

"No," Mrs. Marsh replied decisively. "I'm not going down there on my first night in an afternoon dress. At six o'clock all the men began appearing in dinner jackets and in dress-suits, and I know the women will have on their best, and I'm not going to start out feeling uncomfortable the very first night."

Marsh growled something about a dinner jacket being unsuitable, and said he might as well put on his full evening regalia. Mrs. Marsh insisted the dinner jacket would do, and Marsh put it on, and his growls grew to full-voiced imprecations when he clumsily tried to hook his wife's gown. She was pretty when she was ready to go. Marsh stood sulkily in the parlour waiting for her.

"Now, see here, Jim Marsh," she said, "there's no use of your acting like this. You've got to make up your mind that I am going to be a part of the social life in this city and you've got to help me. I'm your wife and I am entitled to take my proper place. I know what to do, even if you don't, and you might as well decide, first as last, that you'll do as I say in social matters."

"Huh," sneered Marsh, "I don't see anything very social about dining in a hotel."

"That's because you don't know. I was down there this afternoon at teatime, and I saw a whole

lot of women there I just know — I felt it — are social leaders. They will all be in to dinner also, and I am not going down there looking as if I don't understand what is what."

"But," persisted Marsh, "what's the rush? We only arrived here this morning. I don't see the harm in dining quietly to-night and taking our ease at it, instead of being all dressed up like horses and buggies."

Mrs. Marsh looked sharply at him. "If you do not appreciate your position here I do," she said. "Also I appreciate my position. As I have said, I do not intend to be a mere unknown wife of a congressman. I intend to be prominent in society, and you've got to help me. That's all there is to that."

"Oh, all right, all right," Marsh replied. "Of course I'll help you, my dear. I intend that you shall be all you desire to be in that way, and," he added conciliatingly, "you can do it too. Never fear that."

They went down. The dining-rooms were crowded. Much to Mrs. Marsh's surprise a large proportion of the diners were in street clothes, but here and there she noticed a table where the women were resplendent in jewels and low-cut gowns and the men were in evening dress.

"Looks to me," said Marsh, "as if there were a few here who ain't in such a hurry as you are, Molly."

Mrs. Marsh sniffed. A dining-room captain approached them as they stood uncertain in the

door of the largest restaurant room. "A table for two?" he inquired.

"Yes," said Mrs. Marsh. "A good table, please. This is my husband, the Honorable James Marsh, Member of Congress, and we want a very good table."

There was a slight flicker of a smile round the corners of the mouth of the captain. He bowed and said: "Certainly, madam."

Then he led them to a small table in a corner of the room. "But," protested Mrs. Marsh, "I can't see a thing here. Why can't we have one of those tables in the centre of the room?"

"I regret to say those are reserved, madam."

"Oh, sit down, Molly," urged Marsh. "This one is all right."

Mrs. Marsh sat down. Later she saw very ordinary looking persons, some of them in tweeds and the women in tailored suits, shown to the reserved tables, and still later — oh, much later — she learned the efficacy of a dollar bill in securing a "reserved" table in a big restaurant.

The captain stood at attention. He had a pad of paper and a pencil in his hand and had given menu cards to them. The menu card was appalling. It had scores and scores of dishes on it, most of them with French names, and it was subdivided and redivided into *potages*, *poissons*, *rôtis*, *légumes* in a bewildering fashion. Both stared perplexedly at the confusing assortment.

"Would you like some oysters?" suggested the captain.

"Certainly," assented Marsh, much relieved.

"And a clear soup?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps you would care for some English sole à la margeury?"

"That'll be first rate."

"The canvasback ducks are excellent just now," said the captain in an entirely impersonal manner.

"Oh, Jim," exclaimed Mrs. Marsh, "do let's have a canvasback duck. They come from round here somewhere and we've never had one, you know."

Marsh nodded his head. The captain suggested a salad, some cheese and coffee and asked whether they would like their hominy in a chafing-dish or served in the usual way.

"I didn't order hominy," said Marsh.

"It is usually served," the captain observed. "Do you wish the large or the small?"

"Let's have the small."

"What wine do you prefer?" The captain ostentatiously handed a wine list to Marsh. Marsh took it, looked at it for a moment and said: "Champagne."

"Will you be so kind as to indicate the brand?"

"Oh," stammered Marsh, "any good brand."

"And cocktails?"

Marsh looked inquiringly at his wife. She shook her head. The captain called a waiter, read the order to him, cautioned him to be very careful, and hovered about, patting the tablecloth and rearranging the astonishing array of knives

and forks and spoons that had been placed before them while they were giving the order. Marsh and his wife grew nervous over the hoverings of the captain and wondered why he didn't leave. He smiled ingratiatingly, hoped the dinner would be all they could wish and hovered some more. Finally he went away, and as he left Mrs. Marsh's quick ear heard him say in a hoarse whisper to a second captain standing near by: "Another of them rube Congressmen."

Marsh didn't hear it. She blushed hotly and stiffened in her chair. She would show them, the impudent puppies, she thought, that they were not rubes — she would show them!

The room was crowded and gay. The dinner was excellently and quickly served, and they enjoyed it, although they found there was rather too much food and it would have been as well if they had ordered no fish. The waiter suggested a cordial and they took it, and when the cigar boy brought round the cigar tray Marsh selected a long, thin one that looked good. It was good, too, and he felt peaceful and happy as he smoked and listened to his wife's comments on the people in the room.

Presently there was no excuse for staying longer. The diners were leaving. Mrs. Marsh noticed that a good many of them took their coffee in the corridor outside, and resolved she would next time. The orchestra had stopped playing.

"Bring me the check," said Marsh.

The waiter brought the check, laying face down

on a small silver salver. Marsh reached into his pocket for his money and turned the check over. As he looked at the red-ink total he gasped and then whistled.

"How much is it?" asked Mrs. Marsh in a whisper, while the waiter stood stolidly by. Marsh did not reply. He laid a twenty-dollar bill on the salver and rose to go.

"Aren't you going to wait for your change?" asked Mrs. Marsh.

"There won't be any change."

"Jim Marsh, do you mean to tell me that dinner cost twenty dollars?"

"Not exactly, but with the tip it will come to the twenty all right."

It was Mrs. Marsh's turn to gasp. She pursed her lips and was deep in thought most of the time they remained in the corridor.

At ten o'clock they went upstairs. Marsh sat down in a big chair to finish his second cigar and Mrs. Marsh wandered about the room, looking at the pictures and examining the furniture. She noticed a small placard tacked on the door. She read it and turned suddenly on Marsh.

"Jim Marsh!" she exclaimed. "Do you know how much these rooms are costing us?"

"About five dollars a day, I suppose."

"Did you ask?"

"Why, no; I didn't ask. I just registered and told the clerk what I wanted."

"Come here!" she commanded. "Come straight here and look at this."

He walked over and looked at the placard to which she was pointing. It read: "The price of this suite, exclusive of meals is \$11 a day."

"Holy Moses!" shouted Marsh.

"I should think so," said Mrs. Marsh. "Here we have been in this hotel less than half a day and we've got to stay here until the morning, and then without any breakfast we've spent more than thirty dollars for one meal and a place to sleep, to say nothing of tips and baggage and all that. It's an outrage."

"It was a good meal," suggested Marsh weakly.

"Good meal or not, we'll get right out of here."

"But think of your social aspirations."

"I don't need a millionaire's hotel to help me succeed socially," she snapped. "We'll find another place to-morrow."

Marsh had been doing some figuring. He had only a few hundred dollars ahead, as he had paid off many obligations before he left Morganville, and his politics had prevented his giving his whole time to his profession. At thirty dollars a day, with a salary of \$5000 a year — it was before the Congressional salaries had been raised to \$7500 — and a few hundred dollars for mileage, and his clerk hire and stationery account, he could see bankruptcy ahead of him. Of course they wouldn't always eat twenty-dollar meals, but they couldn't eat four-dollar ones, pay this room rental and have anything left.

Next morning Marsh went up to the Capitol

and met some of the members of the House. He made inquiries and discovered that Washington is speckled with hotels not so expensive as the one at which he was staying, where many of the representatives and senators live, and that afternoon he and his wife went out to find one of these. They took two rooms at a rather pretentious hotel on a street not far from the centre of the city. This hotel was a great favourite with the congressional people. It catered to them. The price was two hundred dollars a month for two rooms and bath and meals, as the hotel ran on the American plan. They moved at once, and that night, in the lobby of their new hotel home, Mrs. Marsh met a number of the wives of other members, and observed, not without disquiet again, that her gown seemed to fit in better in the general sartorial scheme there than it had at the big hostelry.

V

“TAKE D. C.”

MARSH spent a good deal of his time at the Capitol, getting acquainted with other members, finding out what his perquisites were, and he soon learned the important thing for a new member is to get on a good committee. He had decided he would go on the Judiciary Committee, as that was in his professional line, and he felt his knowledge of the law and his reputation as a lawyer would make him valuable there. As for the other committees he was not so particular, although Public Lands, or Irrigation, or Rivers and Harbours would be to his liking, inasmuch as he came from a Western state where the questions considered by the land and irrigation committees are important and there was some dredging to be done in the big river in his district.

He tried several times to see the man who was slated to be speaker, and who had the making of the committees; but he found the room crowded with members on the same quest as himself. They were all eager to get good places, and were all using every influence they could bring to bear on the speaker, urging their claims and lobbying in

every possible way for preferment. Marsh expected the speaker would see him at once, and he was much abashed to find he was of no particular importance in the gathering. Men who had served for years with the speaker came and went into the inner room, but the suave secretary to the speaker and the suaver negro messenger kept him outside, with polite assurances that the speaker would see him presently.

After three attempts the speaker's secretary told him the speaker would see him in half an hour. About an hour after that, during which time Marsh had sat impatiently in the outer room, discussing committee places and nothing else with other waiting members, the negro messenger came over and said: "Mr. Marsh, will you please step this way?"

Marsh went in. The speaker was hunched low in a chair. He was chewing the stub of a cigar. He did not rise, but nodded and said: "Marsh?" with a sharp rising inflection.

"Yes, Mr. Speaker."

"Sit down." The speaker removed his cigar, spat vigorously and asked abruptly: "Well, what do you want?"

"I want to consult with you on my committee places."

"Which do you prefer, Ways and Means or Appropriations?" the speaker asked with elaborate irony.

"Why, I hadn't thought of either; but of course —"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake," said the speaker impatiently, "that was a josh, young fellow! Now what do you want?"

"I thought I might be of service on the Committee of Judiciary, and would take details on Public Lands and Irrigation, or possibly, Rivers and Harbours."

"You would take those, would you? Agreeable and accommodating young person, I should say!"

"Of course, if there are any other equally good places —"

The speaker rose and walked across the room, talking to himself: "God in Israel! They are all alike, they are all alike," he muttered. "Come in here fresh from the brush and want to go on the biggest committees right on the jump. Has plain, ordinary horse-sense become a lost commodity in this American nation?" He turned to Marsh. "Don't you know," he snarled, "that there are more than two hundred fellows just like you here now, all hoping to get on the big committees and driving me to drink because I can't make more places than there are? Don't you know that experience is the only thing that counts in this House, and that I can't jump a lot of you new men, however important you may think you are, over the heads of the boys who have been in the game for years? Wake up, young fellow, wake up! Judiciary, hey?"

"Yes, I would prefer Judiciary," said Marsh, who felt very small and insignificant.

"Well, you can't have Judiciary, for every cornfield lawyer who oozes into this House makes a break for that committee right off the bat. You can't have Judiciary. That's full and running over already."

"What can I have?"

The speaker looked at a list he had on the table.

"I want to do the best I can for you," he said. "I can put you at the bottom of District of Columbia or put you on Mines and Mining. Probably I can squeeze you in on a smaller one or two. Which will you have?"

Marsh knew nothing about either committee. He asked for time. "All right," said the speaker. "Drop me a note when you have made up your mind. Remember, now, I want to do well by you, but the pressure is frightful, and every man who comes in here thinks he is an ace, whereas most of them are devices. Drop me a line when you've decided. Don't come round here for a few days for I'm busy — I'm so damned busy I can't get time to sleep."

Marsh talked over the committee places. He discovered that the House and Senate District of Columbia committees act as the boards of aldermen and councilmen for the city of Washington, and that the committee is an important one. Still he was undecided and perplexed. He didn't want to appear too green and he was cautious about asking advice from other members he had met. So he turned to McManus and telegraphed to

him: "Can go on District of Columbia or Mines and Mining. Which do you advise?"

A few hours later he received this reply: "Take D. C. McManus."

Next day Marsh went over to call on the senior senator from his state, William N. Paxton, a famous warrior of the Republican party, who had been in the House of Representatives for many years and then had been promoted to the Senate. He was sixty years old, short, ruddy, good-humoured, rich, although he had had no visible means of support save politics for forty years, and he was a fixture in the Senate apparently. He seemed a jolly, pleasant man, but he could be as cold as a wedge when the occasion demanded, and he had a reputation that extended all over the country for standing by his party and his friends. He was not an orator, but was a good, straightforward talker, convincing in debate and one of the most adroit politicians in the Senate. He had reached the age when all he cared for was the pleasure of being a part of things, and he was under no delusions about either the congressional machinery or the congressional machinists.

He might have retired and lived a life of ease, but he couldn't. So long as there was a breath in him he would be in politics, and no man in the Republic was more skilful in keeping his fences up and his constituents well in hand. He was a genial, companionable man, famed for his dinners, who liked to play poker with his cronies, loved to sit in the cloakroom and swap stories, who was

always at hand where there was work to be done, and had great potency in shaping the affairs of the Senate. Indeed, he was one of the little oligarchy of five or six members who controlled the majority in the Senate and thus controlled the Senate.

"Glad to see you," he said to Marsh. "Hoped you would get round. Most of the other boys have been over. How are you making out?"

"All right, I guess," Marsh replied. "The speaker says I can go on District of Columbia or on Mines and Mining."

"I spoke to him about you. If I were you I'd take District of Columbia. Plenty of hard work, but it gives you an insight into the town where you'll spend most of your time for some years, if you are as successful as I think you will be, and might result in your personal advantage."

"Great God!" blurted Marsh, "am I nothing in this Congress? Can't I get anything on my own account without help from you or McManus. Where do I come in? I am a member of the House, elected on my own merits. Am I a zero in this layout?"

Senator Paxton smiled indulgently. "Have a cigar," he said, "and listen to me for a minute." He took a box of cigars from his desk, held it out while Marsh made a selection, took one himself, lighted it carefully, looked at the end intently to see that it was burning evenly, blew a puff of smoke or two into the air, took out his cigar

again, and again inspected the ash, crossed his legs comfortably and began:

"Now, Marsh, you mustn't think your case is any different from the cases of the vast hordes of new members who have been flocking in here since we began to do business at this stand. It isn't. You are a new member. Nobody here gives a whoop about you until you prove up. I have served in the House and I have served in the Senate, and I want to tell you one thing and that is this: The House of Representatives of the United States of America is the greatest democracy on this earth. It doesn't make a particle of difference what you have been or what you have done before you go there. Past performances do not count; you have to prove up all over again. You have got to make good right there on the floor of that House and in its committee rooms, before the other members will take you at your own estimate or at the estimate of the people who sent you there.

"You think you are an orator. Perhaps you are. Putting aside the fact that oratory doesn't get you much of anything in the House, and personal influence does get you a whole heap, the mere statement that you are an orator means nothing. You have got to show those boys there on the floor. You have got to make a speech or a series of speeches and convince them. And you've got to make them here on this spot, not out in Morganville or anywhere else.

"You are a lawyer. I know you are a good

one. But these fellows don't know it, and they will refuse to believe it until you show them you are a lawyer. You may have won plenty of cases and had a reputation at your local bar, but it takes a demonstration of your legal acumen in Washington to convince these doubting Thomases. And don't misunderstand me. They won't hinder you in your showing what you are. They will help you. They are kindly, human, decent folks, and all of them are playing the same game you are playing. But you've got to display your wares. Every man stands on his own feet in the House of Representatives. He makes or un-makes himself there. If you have the goods they will accept those goods after they have examined them, but not before or on your say-so.

"Successful legislators are made so by experience, and by no other method. Compared to a mediocre experienced man who knows the mechanics of the outfit, the brightest man in the country, without experience, is a child in getting results. Experience is what counts — knowledge of what to do and how to do it. You won't amount to a hill of beans during your first term, or probably during your second term. You've got to learn, but if you are the kind of a man I take you for you will learn right enough, and then you can be of some value to your constituents and to yourself."

Senator Paxton stopped and puffed reflectively at his cigar. Marsh was listening eagerly.

"Now let me tell you some things I have learned

during my years at Washington. If you will take the trouble to look over the men who are the leaders in this House and in this Senate you will undoubtedly think some of them are misfits, has-beens and never-wases, that they are not big enough for the places they hold, or are old dodoes past their prime who should give place to younger and stronger men. That may be so, but if you will go into the subject you will find there isn't one of these men for whom there isn't a reason as big as the Washington Monument—a reason, Marsh, a reason back home or here.

“Men do not get prominence in Congress by haphazard methods, by luck, or by any procedure other than the hard work that gives them the all-essential experience in legislation and the ability to realise on it. There always is a reason for the power of these men, and a mighty good one too.

“Moreover, right here at the beginning of your career I want to tell you of the mistake that has wrecked more congressional careers than any other. That is the mistake of forgetting the people in the district. Men come here term after term, get infatuated with Washington life, begin to think they are secure, don't go back home and mix with the boys, forget their obligations or become impatient over them, and one day they wake up and find that some bright young lawyer, who has been moving about the district, has beaten them for the nomination, and they become the most melancholy objects on this green earth—retired statesmen, ghosts who wander about think-

ing ghostly thoughts of past glories and filled with ghostly memories of other and power days.

“Don’t forget the folks back home are the ones who send you here. No matter how important you may get to be here, the folks back home have the votes. They are the foundations and the arches and the towers and the battlements of your structure.”

The senator stopped and smoked again. “Marsh,” he said, “forgive me for lecturing you, but I want to see you succeed. I can’t live forever. There’s no reason why you shouldn’t take my place in the Senate when I go — no reason except one.”

“What is that?” asked Marsh, already seeing visions of himself in the Senate.

“Perhaps you won’t play the game.”

“Play the game?”

“Yes, you must play the game. You must be regular, you must be with the organisation, you must act with your majority, if it is a majority, or with your minority, if it is a minority. The success the Republican party has had all these years has been due to its discipline, to its organisation. Every soldier has taken orders and obeyed them. You must play the game.”

Marsh walked up to his hotel, revolving in his mind what the senator had said. He recalled the insistence of everybody that he must play the game. What was the game? He wondered vaguely if he would be a good player and if it would be a good game.

VI

THE FIRST RECEPTION

CONGRESS opened with a great bustle and clamour. The new speaker was elected. Marsh was given two assistant doortenders as his share of the patronage doled out by what was known as the Hog Combine, an organisation of older majority members who had the influence and votes to control the distribution of the pie, and was told he might have a fifteen-hundred-dollar extra clerk later in the session. McManus promptly sent on men for the places. Marsh was assigned to the committees on District of Columbia, Revision of the Laws and Expenditures in the Navy Department. He soon found these latter committees were merely ornamental, like many others, and for the purpose of providing chairmanships and clerks to the faithful. The House droned along for a few days, took the Christmas recess, and came back early in January to square away for the work of the session.

Marsh and his wife went to Morganville for Christmas and spent a week at the home of Mrs. Marsh's mother, a widow who had a small in-

come from her husband's life insurance. Dorothy was well and progressing in her studies. They returned to the Bruxton Hotel a day or so before New Year's and Mrs. Marsh took up the consideration of her social plans. Marsh was in receipt of some little money on an old account, when he was in Morganville, but he was not happy financially. His hotel bills were bigger than he had thought they would be and Mrs. Marsh needed more money than he expected she would.

"Molly," he said one day at breakfast, "when are you going to start something socially?"

"Pretty soon," Mrs. Marsh replied. "Next week, Wednesday, I am going with some of the other ladies to make the Cabinet calls and on the Thursday after that to make the senatorial calls. Then we are to have our first reception here the week after that."

"Who's we?"

"The congressional ladies living in this hotel," said Mrs. Marsh with much dignity.

There were fifteen or sixteen of them, mostly wives of representatives from the West and South, and not many of them who had been much in Washington, although several of the husbands had served two terms and one had lived in the city during Congresses for six years. She was a quiet woman and not much taken with society, and the two-termers were the social arbiters for that hotel set.

Four of the ladies, including Mrs. Marsh, engaged a carriage jointly and set out to make the

Cabinet calls on the required Wednesday. When Marsh got home that night Mrs. Marsh was waiting for him in the lobby, blazing with indignation.

"Oh, Jim," she gasped.

"What's the matter, Molly?" he asked.
"Did a Cabinet woman bite you?"

"If you knew what I have gone through this afternoon you wouldn't talk to me that way!" she flared.

"Come upstairs, Molly," soothed Marsh, "and then you can tell me all about it. What happened?" he asked, when they had reached the room.

"What happened? What didn't happen? I never was so humiliated in my life. If you don't do something about it I'll go straight home to Morganville."

"But how the devil can I do anything until I know what there is to do?"

"Well, Mrs. Going and Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Exeter and myself took a carriage this afternoon to make our Cabinet calls."

"Did you have to make them?"

"Of course; else the Cabinet women won't call on us; you see. It was bad enough at the first house we went to. There was a butler at the door and he took our cards, and pretty soon we were ushered up a stairway and into a room full of women with a lot of them standing in a line, at the head of which was the Cabinet woman, and we were introduced to her and then passed down

the line. Before I got to the end my name had been twisted from Marsh to Smarsh and Larsh and Darsh and the end woman called me Smith, and all of them stuck out clammy hands to us and limply shook them at us, and said: 'How-do' and asked us: 'How do you like Washington?' and then went on talking to one another. A servant shoved us over to a table where there was a sort of pink lemonade and some frowsy ladyfingers on plates and another servant dipped us out a sloppy cup of that pink stuff that tasted a little like that champagne we had at the hotel the first night we came, only very weak. We drank it and then stood round on one foot and another, and not one of the women in the line paid any attention to us or looked as if she knew we were on the earth. At last we escaped."

She stopped out of breath.

"That was pretty tough!" laughed Marsh.

"You wait," she went on. "That's not the worst. We went to another Cabinet place and it was about the same there, although this Cabinet woman is from our state and she asked me if I lived in it. And every last one of the ladies in the line said: 'How-do, Mrs. Parsh; how do you like Washington?' and we drank some more of that horrid pink stuff, only this time it was yellowish.

"At the next place the Cabinet woman didn't have any one to help her receive. She was doing it alone. She stood in the hall talking to two young squirts of Central American legation

second-secretaries, and as the butler announced us she never even turned her head, but stuck out her hand at us and said: 'How-do,' and kept on talking. We were shooed into a drawing room and there found a lot of other women, congressmen's wives, too, standing round like a lot of schoolgirls and not knowing what to do. She kept on talking and laughing with the two little pie-faced secretaries, and we stood there like a flock of geese until some woman, I don't know who she was, announced she was not going to put up with it any longer, and made for the door. We all followed, and the Cabinet woman never even noticed us. When one of us went up to her and told her 'we have enjoyed our visit with you, Mrs. Secretary,' she sort of raised her eyebrows as if to ask: 'Who the dickens are you and how did you get in here?' and kept on talking, and never even said good-bye or anything. I'm not going to stand that sort of thing, Jim, and you've just got to do something about it."

"All right, all right," soothed her husband; "but come on down to dinner now."

The hotel that night buzzed with the discussion and comment on the action of the Cabinet women. The older ones tried to pacify the newer ones by telling them how perfunctory these Cabinet calls were, anyhow, and how the only recognition they would get would be some day when a carriage would drive up in front of the hotel and a footman come in and hand the clerk a lot of cards for the ladies who had left their cards, and ten to one

the Cabinet woman wouldn't be in the carriage even.

Then came the first grand reception of the congressional ladies of the hotel. There was much excitement and meetings were held in the lobbies and in the parlours for several days to discuss plans, arrange details and make out lists of those to whom cards should be sent. The older ones fixed up the notices of the society columns of the newspapers, telling how the ladies of the hotel would receive on Tuesday afternoon, and giving their names. Next morning the papers were eagerly read to see if the notice was printed. It was there near the top, and Mrs. James Marsh cut the items out of her papers and carefully preserved them. It was the first time her name had appeared in the social columns of a newspaper printed outside of Morganville, but she firmly resolved it should not be the last.

There were long discussions over the list of those to whom cards should be sent. Some were for including this one and excluding that one. "You must send cards to everybody," explained the third-termers, the quiet woman who didn't care for society. "Then, no matter if none of the big ones comes, you can send the papers a notice saying: 'Among those invited were,' and give all the best names, and nobody but the society editors will know they didn't come, especially nobody back home when we send the papers out."

So everybody was invited, and there was much planning of costumes and remodelling of gowns

and discussing over the proper places to put the ferns and palms and rubber plants that were to be hired from the near-by florist to supplement the dusty foliage that stood permanently about the hotel lobby and in the parlours.

The momentous afternoon came. At four o'clock the congressional ladies of the Bruxton Hotel gathered in the parlours. Each lady wore her fussiest specimen of the home dressmaker's art, and each one carried a bunch of pink carnations or pink sweet-peas tied with pink gauze — each one except Mrs. Marsh. She carried a cluster of roses, and some of the other women wondered why they hadn't bought roses, too, for Mrs. Marsh's flowers gave her an air of distinction. Besides, hers were tied with satin ribbon and not with pink gauze. All the ladies had on white gloves. There was a faint odour of benzine, mingled with the heavy perfumes some of them used, and the frozen florist-smell of the cold storage flowers. They looked self-conscious and important and most of them were nervous. Not many of them ever had participated in so fashionable a function as this, and each watched the other to see what should be done, copying the airs of those who appeared at ease. These sophisticated ones, really nervous themselves, took their cues from the older ones who had been to big receptions and had observed at close range the manners of the *grandes dames*.

Guests who came to the reception were expected to turn sharply to the right after they entered,

pass along a corridor and thence into the parlours. A cluster of baskets, all tied with ribbons and each bearing a card on which was the name of one of the ladies in the receiving line, was in this corridor on a table. The visitors were expected to drop their three cards two for the husband and one for the wife — into whichever of these baskets belonged to the receiving lady who was the particular object of that particular call. Thus Mrs. Marsh's friends would drop their cards in Mrs. Marsh's basket, and Mrs. Marsh would know, after the reception, to whom she owed calls. A bowl of punch had been provided, and a negro in white gloves and a spotted dress-suit was serving it. It was near-champagne punch — two bottles of domestic brand in a gallon of water, with sugar and lemons and a few other things added. There were small cakes on plates and little lettuce sandwiches.

The women stood in groups, looking like weeping willows and waiting for their callers. It was ghastly for the first half hour, for nobody came, and a few of the newer congressional ladies of the Bruxton Hotel were on the verge of tears over the failure of their débuts as hostesses. In about three-quarters of an hour a few women dropped in, the Bruxton ladies formed themselves into a wavering line, and these guests, who were from the congressional sets in the other hotels, were presented in turn. They stood about for a few moments, chatted, asked their hostesses how they liked Washington, assured them they

would like Washington very much — “the social life is so interesting” — had some punch and slipped away. At a half after five there had been forty or fifty callers and the reception was an assured success. The congressional ladies of the Bruxton Hotel were jubilant; but they still clung desperately to their flowers, and listened eagerly for the roll of carriage wheels on the asphalt outside, as they knew the most fashionable women delayed their calls until the last.

There had been no carriage calls, but at twenty minutes to six a carriage drove up, a real carriage with a liveried coachman, a liveried footman and a crest on the door of it. It could be nothing less than a Cabinet carriage, the excited ladies said, as they peered through the window, and there was a great fluttering of hearts and fans and hurried scramble to get in line to receive the distinguished guest. They waited. No one came. Then a curious one peeked through a window.

“Oh, dear,” she said, “she’s not coming in. She’s only leaving cards!”

It was true enough. The distinguished guest — who was a Cabinet lady, for some of the Bruxton ladies recognised the carriage — didn’t deign to call in person. Instead, if she happened to be in the carriage, which no one could tell, she sent her footman to the door with her three cards — two for the secretary and one for herself — and the footman gave the cards to the doorman, hurried back, hopped on the box, and the carriage rumbled away, the ceremony being over. The

Bruyton ladies were disappointed, of course, for they hoped she might stay a minute or two with them, but there was much satisfaction in the thought that a real one had left cards. That meant a lot, especially for the fortunate and envied Bruyton lady for whom the cards were left, although all the ladies felt they shared, to some extent, in the reflected glory of the event. There were a few more ordinary calls, and at six o'clock the husbands came along, tested the punch, then left immediately for the bar. The women hurried to gather their baskets and inspect their cards.

There was much interest and excitement. Each of the Bruyton congressional ladies shuffled rapidly through her cards, sorting them into the groups of threes, to see if the Cabinet lady had called on her. Each hoped she was the magnet that drew the social leader to the reception, and each magnanimously decided not to be too haughty about it, but to take a call from a Cabinet lady as a matter of course. As the Bruyton ladies finished their cards, some of them sorting them out twice to make sure, each one glanced covertly round to see who had secured the prize. They were all disappointed and they all showed it. The cards of the Cabinet lady were not in any basket. Instead, they were found on one of the small tables that had held the baskets.

It was a *contretemps*, to be sure. The footman, being rather bored of jumping off the carriage and on it again and handing cards in at

doors, had been careless in telling the doorman for whom the cards were intended. The doorman didn't understand the name, and the footman was gone before he had a chance to ask. He was a wise doorman. He had been at that hotel for years and had seen many receptions. He knew how important this call was, and he refused to complicate matters by guessing at the name of the favoured lady. So he tiptoed in, laid the cards on the table in neutral ground, tiptoed out again and said nothing. He was, as remarked, a wise doorman.

Wherefore, the question that agitated the Bruxton Hotel that night was this — which one of the ladies was entitled to the call? The magnitude and importance of the problem was impressed on the husbands. The women gathered in little groups after dinner and viewed the matter in all its lights. Arguments were privately brought forward, tending to show how the proponent of the argument was the person who should have the cards, and husbands were appealed to to discover if these feminine reasons might not be the real ones. Most of this was done privately in whispers and in groups. Some of the women led their husbands aside to ask them to suggest a real reason for the wife to advance to uphold her contention that the cards should be hers. Outwardly, however, the women were very sweet and self-sacrificing. Each insisted that the other should have the cards, and there was a babble of

sugary, "Oh, you take them, my dear," and other honied expressions, that were belied by the steely looks in the eyes of the soft speakers.

Each woman wanted the cards desperately, passionately, but each woman was loath to advance her claim publicly. The cards were on the table, which had been moved out into the lobby. The women eyed them longingly, but no one ventured to pick them up. Mrs. Marsh had not taken much part in the discussion. She had asked her husband if there was any reason why this particular Cabinet woman could call on her, and whether Marsh knew the secretary.

"Don't know him from a side of sole leather," Marsh replied. "Haven't even seen him yet."

Presently Mrs. Marsh arose, walked over to the table and picked up the cards. She turned to the astonished women in the lobby and said: "Ladies, I see no one cares particularly for these cards, and I would like them very much for souvenirs of my first reception in Washington. I'll take them, if you don't mind." She smiled radiantly at them. "Of course you won't mind, will you?" she asked sweetly.

"Oh, certainly not; you are quite welcome to them," some of the women said acidly. Others only stared at her as if appalled by her audacity. Mrs. Marsh bowed her thanks and walked off, followed by the whispered comment, "Well, of all the nerve!" Mrs. Marsh affected not to hear. She sailed across the room and took the elevator, clutching the precious cards to her bosom.

Next morning the ladies had their final thrill. The papers came and their names were all printed in the society columns as giving "a charming reception." Some of the names of those invited were printed. It was observed the papers said: "Mrs. John Marsh, wife of Representative John Marsh, wore a handsome gown of brown velvet with diamonds." That was the only gown described. They all wondered where the society editors got their information — all but Mrs. Marsh. She didn't wonder. She knew, for she had written notes to the society editors in which that interesting and important information was communicated.

VII

NOTHING FIT TO WEAR

MARSH found his work on the District of Columbia Committee interesting but laborious. The committee was charged with making the appropriations for the Government's share of the municipal expenses of the city of Washington and passed on all new projects for improvements in addition to legislating for the city, making laws instead of ordinances as the ordinary city governing body does. He soon learned the government of the city, aside from the committees in the House and Senate, is vested in a commission of three men, appointed by the president, one of whom is a Republican, one a Democrat, and the third an officer of the engineer corps of the army, who has charge of all the engineering projects in the District of Columbia.

He also learned that as there is very little manufacturing in Washington and not a great deal of wholesale trade, the chief industry of most citizens is dealing in real estate, and he became early aware that the real-estate dealers, who were in cliques, headed by various banking interests largely, were very active in promoting their par-

ticular schemes. They all had property they wanted to sell to the Government for parks, all had property through which streets must be opened, they said, in order to accommodate the growth of the city and, incidentally — although they never said this — their subdivisions. The public-utilities men had plans for extensions of lines and renewal and relaxing of charters, and he soon thought that every citizen of the district who owned any property or hoped to own any or had any other axe to grind, wanted the District of Columbia to legislate for his individual benefit.

Nor was he long in finding out that a representative in Congress is, for the most part, merely a sublimated errand boy for his constituents. He had a large mail, and it seemed to him as if every person in his district, who by any possibility could have voted for him, wanted a postmastership; a rural-free-delivery carrier appointed, or had some task for him to do at one of the departments or some favour to be granted or arranged for. He spent a good deal of his time running from one department to another, interviewing chiefs of bureaus, assistant secretaries, and occasionally talking with the secretaries themselves. He went several times to the White House, where the president always received him cordially, recalling his first visit with McManus, and usually gave him what he wanted.

He found out about the seed distribution and the document distribution, and early learned the efficacy of well-placed seeds and public documents

as vote-holders. He answered every letter, ran every errand, worked conscientiously in his committee, where his good knowledge of the law was soon appreciated and where there was no disposition on the part of the other members to deprive him of all the work he would do. He met many of the leading men of Washington, bankers, business men, real-estate dealers and professional men, and cultivated acquaintance in the House among the other members. No big question, aside from the shaping of the appropriation bills, was up, but he always voted right when there was a vote, and he went in to see the speaker often and grew to like that forceful, unconventional person. He was a busy man.

The House was in the doldrums. Marsh attended the sessions regularly, studied parliamentary practice and precedent, listened to the speeches but did not seek recognition for himself, although the speaker had told him that if he had a speech in his system he would recognise him at some opportune time.

"Keep quiet," advised some of the older members with whom he had become friendly. "Don't say anything until there is something worth while to say. Don't get a reputation as a windjammer."

He felt one or two speeches boiling in him, but after he had examined his symptoms carefully he concluded that what he thought was boiling was merely simmering and he refrained. He learned that Senator Paxton was right when he said

a new member of the House is of no consequence to himself or to any one else except as a voting unit, and he cultivated the senator, listened to him attentively and acted on his advice.

Mrs. Marsh continued her social campaigning. She made her congressional and senatorial calls religiously, clubbing with other women for a carriage and rushing from house to house and from apartment to apartment on the appointed days. She was worried about her clothes. They were as good as the gowns of any of the ladies in the Bruxton, but when she went to other places she felt there was something about them that stamped them as unmistakably homemade when viewed alongside the dresses of the women who had been in Washington longer than she had.

One afternoon she went to a reception given by the wife of a bureau chief in one of the departments. It was a pretentious affair. The hostess lived in a big apartment house, and that apartment house had a broad sweep of lobby on the ground floor, with near-onyx pillars that looked as if they were made of vari-coloured soap and much gaudy ornamentation. The reception was held in this lobby. There was a quantity of flowers, a teatable, a punch bowl, and the servants were experienced men, sent by the city's foremost caterer, who knew just how things should be done. Receiving with this hostess there were fifteen or twenty women, wives of representatives, the wife of one of the senators from the home state of the hostess, and the wives of several important

bureau heads, together with the wife of an assistant secretary. There was a small orchestra that played behind a bank of palms, and altogether it was a smart function.

That night Mrs. Marsh spoke about it to her husband. "I don't see how she does it," Mrs. Marsh said. "Her husband is only a bureau chief and doesn't get more than five thousand dollars a year. It must cost a lot to live in that apartment house and they have two daughters in school. Besides, I hear they have no private income."

"It's beyond me," said Marsh.

Mrs. Marsh pursued the subject further. She asked Mrs. Brayton, who had been in Washington for eight years, how this woman, and many other women like her, could afford such splurges.

"It's simple enough," replied Mrs. Brayton. "She gives only one of these in a season, or at most two. I don't know what they cost, but I suppose a couple of hundred dollars each, maybe more for the embroideries of life are expensive in Washington. But if you could see how they live when they are not on dress-parade you wouldn't ask. All their comfort and all their pleasure is sacrificed for these exhibitions. If you were to go upstairs to her apartment you would find it is very small. You would find a gas plate in the bathroom, where they get breakfasts. You would see the husband going out every morning to bring back a few rolls or something in a

paper bag. You would see that she wears a kimono all day and has but two smart gowns, but that these are very smart.

“You would see that she and her husband economise in every possible way, that they scrimp and eat their meals at a cheap boarding house, and actually turn off the electric light and sit in the dark to save as much as they can. When you make your party call and go up to her apartment you will find everything has been tucked away, hidden behind screens, to give an idea of spaciousness that doesn't exist. You will see the beds are sofa beds and look like lounges on these occasions, and you will observe that the husband's clothes are shiny and that he is always in the background. The hardships they endure to make these displays are positively sickening; but she is socially ambitious — a climber — and she will stop at nothing in the way of hidden discomforts for herself and her husband in order that she may appear radiant and successful on the days she makes her splurge. They will eat dry rolls for breakfast for a week so that she may have a carriage on the day she goes out to peddle her pasteboards.”

“Peddle her pasteboards?” repeated Mrs. Marsh.

“Yes, drive about and leave her cards on people she has never seen and who have never seen her, but whom she hopes to see, or even have at one of her affairs if assiduous cultivation will bring it about.”

"Are there many women like that in Washington?"

"Dozens, my dear; scores of them. And do not think they are all in the official class either. Some of the people who live in the biggest houses and have the most exclusive connections are so hard up, in reality, they resort to the pettiest economies and use all sorts of subterfuges to get money for their shows. If you could look over the books of the tradesmen of this city you would see what I mean."

A few days later Mrs. Paxton, wife of the senator, called on Mrs. Marsh.

"Let me go up to your rooms," she said. "I want to have a quiet chat with you."

Mrs. Paxton was a gracious, cultured, stylish woman of fifty-five. She gowned herself with much distinction. She had been in Washington for many years and was a leader in the most exclusive official set, besides being a guest at the biggest houses of resident and ambassadorial society.

She sat down in the room the Marshes used as a parlour. It was a room of good size with an alcove. There was a bath adjoining and another bedroom. Mrs. Paxton removed her gloves and settled herself comfortably in her chair.

"You are planning to have a house of your own one of these days, I suppose?" she remarked.

"Oh, yes," Mrs. Marsh replied. "We came here temporarily, so that we could make sure before we took a lease."

Mrs. Paxton smiled innocently. She knew why the Marshes were at the Bruxton.

"Still," continued Mrs. Paxton, "one can be comfortable in a hotel. You are quite cosy and homelike here."

Mrs. Marsh had rearranged the furniture, added a few of her own possessions and a picture or two. The rooms were attractive.

"But," continued Mrs. Paxton vivaciously, "I didn't come here to talk about houses or hotels. I have something far more important than that to say. You know the senator and I are interested in you and your husband?"

Mrs. Marsh murmured her gratitude.

"Well, I am giving a reception at my home three weeks from Thursday and I want you to come and help me receive."

Mrs. Marsh's heart beat rapidly. To help the distinguished and fashionable Mrs. Paxton receive was a big step forward!

"Of course," continued Mrs. Paxton, "it is a state day reception, you know, when Mrs. Rogers, the wife of my husband's colleague, and myself receive all the people from our state who care to come, and the other congressional ladies from the state will be in the line too."

Mrs. Marsh tried not to show her disappointment in her face, but didn't succeed very well. The astute Mrs. Paxton noticed her expression of dismay.

"It is one of those political-social functions we have to give every year. I assure you you have

no idea how much we congressional wives can do socially to aid our husbands. And I know you will be of very great assistance to Mr. Marsh and that you will be a great success socially. Later in the season I shall be giving more exclusive affairs, and I shall count on you to assist me."

Mrs. Marsh became radiant again. She promised to come to the state reception, and they chatted on various topics for a few minutes. Then Mrs. Marsh plunged into what was dearest to her heart. "By the way, Mrs. Paxton," she said, "can you direct me to a good dressmaker here?"

Mrs. Paxton looked quickly at her. "Why," she replied, "I know several. What sort of a gown are you planning?"

"Oh, I don't know exactly. I need several. You see —" She hesitated.

"Yes!" Mrs. Paxton was very sympathetic.

"Oh," confessed Mrs. Marsh, "the wardrobe I brought with me doesn't seem to be right. My dresses are of good material and were made by our best woman, but they lack something. They are too elaborate. The dressmaker put too many trimmings on them. They haven't that distinction I notice here. They look homemade, and I hate them," she concluded vehemently.

Mrs. Paxton smiled indulgently. "I know exactly how you feel," she said kindly. "I know how you had your gowns made from the very latest fashion books from Paris and New York, but I know also the ways of the country dressmaker

and what she does with the book design. For political reasons I still have a few gowns made out home, but " — she shuddered — " I never wear them here. Maybe I can help you."

She talked so wisely and so frankly Mrs. Marsh was completely won to her, and went to her closets and brought out her entire wardrobe. The elder woman discussed the dresses with her, pointing out their deficiencies, suggesting certain alterations, all in the line of simplicity, and the elimination of the choicest decorative creations of the home artiste, advising new gowns of certain kinds, speaking illuminatingly of the trend of the styles, of what the best-dressed women were wearing, and discussing the art of dress in all its phases and particularly in its Washington phase.

They planned some new gowns, three in number, for a beginning. There was to be a street dress, tailored, and a tailored calling dress, a little more elaborate than the plain street one. Then there was to be a gown suitable for the afternoon, with a removable guimpe, so that it could be made into an evening gown by a feminine miracle which apparently they both understood.

Mrs. Paxton introduced the subject of price discreetly. She told Mrs. Marsh the street gown would cost her about eighty-five dollars at a good tailor's, the more elaborate tailored gown about one hundred and fifteen dollars, and the other gown a hundred dollars. Three hundred dollars would start Mrs. Marsh on the road to correct gowning, and she gave her the names of a

tailor and a dressmaker who, on Mrs. Paxton's introduction, would give her good service. Mrs. Marsh absorbed the information. She was eager and enthusiastic, for her wardrobe, although it seemed regal when she left Morganville, was far from meeting her already educated Washington needs.

When Marsh came home to dinner she introduced the subject of new gowns diplomatically.

"Jim," she began, "I think you should have a new dress-suit."

"Pshaw!" said Marsh, "I don't need one. The one I've got is good enough. I've only had it four years."

"Well," continued Mrs. Marsh decisively, "I think you should have a new one. I notice the best-dressed men wear evening clothes that fit better than yours do, and have a newer cut and seem much handsomer. You know, Jim," she said, coming over to him and putting an arm about his neck, "I don't want to see my big, handsome husband wearing evening clothes that look shabby and out-of-date beside those of other men."

"Oh, well," answered Marsh, "I guess these will do for a while yet. Besides, Molly, if I wait until I get home I can get a new suit forty or fifty dollars cheaper than I can get one here or in New York."

"That's just it! If you go out to that country tailor you'll get another of those horrible, ill-fitting affairs."

"Country tailor!" exclaimed Marsh. "Why

Bannard has been making my clothes for years! Since when did you get so uppish about country tailors? That dressmaker of yours certainly turned you out in good style."

"She didn't, Jim," protested Mrs. Marsh. "I haven't a single dress I ought to wear. They don't fit and they are all fussed up with concoctions she invented out of her own head, I guess, that I once thought were fine, and that I now know are merely things to laugh at. My dresses all look homemade. There isn't a bit of style or distinction about them. I've got to have some new one, and most of the old ones must be made over."

Marsh looked grave. "Molly," he said, "I wouldn't go in for much of that if I were you. It is costing a heap to live here. You know we pay two hundred dollars a month for these rooms and our food, and that doesn't leave much out of what I get for other things. It's almost half of my salary. Besides I've got to run again this fall, and I need all I can get for that, and there's not much coming in from the office. Can't you wait?"

"No, I can't," pouted Mrs. Marsh. "Mrs. Senator Paxton was here to-day, and she very kindly pointed out to me what I should do to be well-dressed."

"Darn Mrs. Senator Paxton!" exclaimed Marsh.

"She was doing it for our good, yours as well as mine," protested Mrs. Marsh. "I have my social way to make here and I want to keep you

in your career, and the first thing I must do is to be well-dressed. I've simply got to have some new clothes."

"How much will it cost?"

"I don't know yet. Mrs. Paxton gave me the names of a tailor and a dressmaker, and I'm going to see them to-morrow."

Marsh was silent for a few moments. "Well, be as easy on me as you can, Molly," he finally said.

A few days later Marsh came home in high spirits. "Don't worry about those clothes of yours, Molly," he said. "I'm going to make some money outside of my salary."

She rushed over to him; put her arms about him and kissed him. "Jim," she gurgled, "you are a dear! How are you going to make it?"

"One of the men I know up at the House gave me a tip on the stock market. I've bought three hundred shares and margined it five points. It took fifteen hundred dollars, about all I had in the bank, but I'll have a lot in a few days. It's going up sure."

Mrs. Marsh didn't know what he was talking about, but she accepted his assurances that he would make some money. The next day she ordered two suits of Mrs. Paxton's tailor and a gown from the fashionable dressmaker.

VIII

THE OBLIGING BANKER

MARSH watched his stock speculation carefully. He had had some little experience in buying stocks, generally with negligible results, and had dabbled in wheat and pork through the local broker's office in Morganville. Like nearly everybody else in his position he had invested a few times in mining stocks, but had made no money. The man who gave him the information, Charles H. Rambo, was a representative from a Middle-Western state, who had been in Congress for twelve years—six terms. He lived comfortably on a good street in the northwestern section of the city, was a member of an important committee, and though he was in no sense one of the leaders of the majority, he was in the close-up second flight, had the confidence of the real leaders and was generally aware of policies and plans before the rank and file. He was a sort of outer guard, not especially in the circle, but still of it enough to know what was going on and to be useful in many ways. He was thrifty, also, and a wolf for money.

The stock moved by fractions for a few days, neither gaining nor losing much. Then it began to climb about a point a day. At the end of a week Marsh had a profit of a clear four points. He met Rambo.

"Did you get any of that stuff I told you about?" asked Rambo.

"Three hundred shares."

"Sell it," said Rambo.

"But," protested Marsh, "it's doing well. I've got four points in already."

"Sell it," repeated Rambo. "This isn't the only stock in the world, and you're twelve hundred dollars to the good. The Stock Exchange isn't going to close up, you know. There'll be other stocks."

"Don't you think it will go any higher?"

"Marsh," said Rambo, "let me tell you something. Washington is all cluttered up with men who can tell you when to buy stocks, but there are mighty few of them who can and will tell you when to sell. The person who is of real value to a man who is speculating in stocks isn't the one who tells you when to buy. The real asset is the man who knows when to sell. That's the chap you want to tie to. And let me give you another tip while I'm on the subject. Never buy anything you can't sell. I don't care if it is a stock in the most profitable concern going, don't buy it unless you know exactly where you can sell it when you want to. Stick to the listed stuff. There's always a market for that, and there may come

times when you want quick money. Also, sell that three hundred shares of yours."

He walked away. Marsh sold his stock, took his profit, and for two days suffered agonies of remorse over the lost opportunities, for the stock went up three more points. Then one day the whole market broke and his stock began sliding down rapidly. It wasn't long until it was a point below where he had bought it.

"What did I tell you?" asked Rambo, who met him in the cloakroom. "You remember what I said. The chap to tie to in stock speculation is the chap who knows when to sell. Any idiot who has any knowledge of conditions knows when to buy."

Meantime cards for one of the big White House receptions had come in, and Mrs. Marsh spent feverish days with her dressmaker and feverish nights thinking about her gown, and was on the verge of a collapse, because of the delays and bother she had with the overtaxed modiste, who was trying to finish her gown and the gowns for twenty other equally insistent ladies, satisfy them all, and maintain her mental balance during the process.

The gown came home on the afternoon before the reception. It was a success. Marsh's eyes brightened when he had finished hooking it, and Mrs. Marsh stood before him, radiant and for the first time in her life correctly and stylishly attired in every detail. The process of providing for these details had taken a considerable amount

more than the hundred dollars the gown was to cost, which, it was discovered later, was increased visibly by the subtle addition of "extras" in the bill. But Marsh thought it money well spent when he saw the completed result, and he was proud of his wife as he escorted her downstairs and to the carriage he and another representative living in the house had hired for the occasion.

This was before the addition of the wings to the White House under the direction of President Roosevelt, and the Marsh carriage joined the long string of vehicles that was proceeding slowly up to the front portico. It took half an hour to get to the door, and inside the place was jammed. The red-coated Marine Band was crashing out lively music, the halls and stairway were abloom with flowers, the big East Room was so crowded it was impossible to move about. Presently the presidential party came down the stairway and the reception began. Mrs. Marsh had been jostled until she felt ill. A clumsy man had stepped on her dress. Her lace caught in the sword of an officer and she was sure it was torn. She had seen only a few people she knew, but she clung to her husband's arm and beamed, for she was at a White House reception, an invited guest, and it would look fine in the Morganville paper and cause much comment among the set on the hill where she had shone in former days.

They moved slowly along in the line. It took half an hour to get to the president, who was standing at the head of the reception group shak-

ing hands rapidly, smiling like an automaton and telling each one how happy he was to have the honour. His lips smiled, but there was a very tired look in his eyes. Mrs. Marsh noticed he was quick to grasp the hand of those presented, and quick to let go, before any muscular patriot had a chance to grip him, and she was quite flustered when the aide who was making the presentations leaned over and said sharply: "Names, please."

"Representative and Mrs. James Marsh," said the aide, in an automatic, staccato fashion. The president bowed to Mrs. Marsh, shook hands with her, said something about being pleased to greet her, turned to grasp Marsh's hand and recognised him. "Glad to see you, Marsh," he said. "Hope you are enjoying yourself."

Marsh lingered to talk, but he felt an insistent, steady pressure on his back. Before he knew what had happened he was far down the line with Mrs. Marsh, bowing to the other men and women who were of the reception party, while the aides were shoving others past the president as they had shoved him.

The Marshes tried to move about the room, but could not because of the crowd. They noticed women there in the most elaborate gowns, sparkling in their diamonds and they noticed others, evidently tourists, who wore street suits and shirt-waists. There were men in full evening dress with white ties and gloves and waistcoats, and men in dinner jackets and black ties. The army

and navy officers wore their dress uniforms, the diplomats the uniforms of their ranks, and altogether it was a rather enlivening spectacle; but the crowd was so dense, and the room was so warm and the mingled odour of perfumes, flowers and humanity so heavy that the Marshes were glad to get away, especially after they discovered how hopeless it was to get near the refreshments, which were served from a buffet in an adjoining room. Next day the papers, in their descriptions of the gowns the ladies wore, carried a line about Mrs. Marsh's gown. She had sent that detail to the society editors herself.

Marsh worked hard in his committee and attended the sessions of the House regularly. Several important Philippine questions were up, and there were two or three occasions when he thought he would ask the speaker for recognition for an hour, in order to make a set speech and show his colleagues what manner of an orator he was. He had some pronounced views on the subject of imperialism, well within scope of party policy, and he felt he could do a good stroke for himself by talking. He met Senator Paxton in the Capitol and told him what he had in mind.

"Marsh," said Paxton, "I wouldn't do it if I were you—not yet. There's nothing in this imperialism business that needs any comment from you at this time. Don't be in such a rush to exhibit your oratory. Keep quiet, if you can, and wait for a real opportunity. There are not forty votes changed in a year by speechmaking in the

House or in the Senate, for the speeches you hear are only the embroidery, the ornamentation of the serious work of Congress. We do our legislating in committees, as you have discovered, and bring the product of our deliberations out for the House to look over. The changes that are made then are made because of suggestions in debate and because of personal influence. You could talk a week in favour of a committee bill or against it, and when the line-up came you would find it would be partisan, almost exclusively, and as previously arranged and planned for.

“Oratory is a lost art, they say, but I don’t think that is true. We have plenty of good orators, but we don’t need them the way we used to. We have other and wider and better methods for obtaining publicity. To be sure we use speakers in our campaigns, but that is merely for the purpose of publicity and to keep the candidates advertised, which is just as necessary as it is to keep a brand of soap advertised. Political oratory has little effect on changing votes, for all the orator can say on any given subject has probably already been said in the newspapers and elsewhere, and most of the hearers know as much, if not more, than the speaker. In the next ten years you will find the people will refuse to hear any but the biggest men in the party, or in any party, and that they will go to hear the biggest ones only on the basis of a show, and not because they want to hear issues discussed. So far as this Congress is concerned, or any Congress, it is the personal

equation that counts, the knowledge of men, the give-and-take method, the power of organisation, the desire of every individual to remain in office. These are the things that direct legislation, not oratory. You will find many men in this House and in the Senate who haven't the range of expression of a well-defined clam, or a much greater variety of oratorical ideas than an educated hen, who get what they go after; while if you observe the great orators, you will discover full galleries, filled with people who want to see the show, and a very bored congregation of senators or representatives, who are wondering how soon the orator will get through so that they may go on with the work they have in hand, and secure the various things they want to help keep them in office.

"I'm not saying it isn't a good thing to shoot off a few fireworks now and then, but I am saying that the great orators of this day are not half so potent legislatively as the men who say comparatively nothing, but who move about among their fellows, understand what they want, and go after it intelligently, on the basis of 'you help me to this and I'll help you to that.'"

Senator Paxton lighted a cigar, gave one to Marsh, patted him on the shoulder in a fatherly manner and moved away. Marsh looked after him. So far as he knew Paxton had not made a set speech in several sessions, although he appeared frequently in debate, speaking briefly from time to time and always understanding his subject; and yet Paxton had the reputation of being

able to get more for his state, and incidentally for himself, than any Western senator, and he had more power. Marsh was thinking of what Paxton had said when Rambo came up.

"Hello, Marsh," said Rambo, who was getting very friendly with Marsh. "How are they coming?"

"So, so," answered Marsh absently. He wondered why Rambo was making himself so agreeable.

"Made any money lately?"

"Not much."

"Well," said Rambo confidentially, "I've had a tip that will enable us to make a few dollars. Some friends of mine were down from New York yesterday, and they told me I wouldn't miss much if I bought a few shares of Union."

"Union what?"

"Union Consolidated. I've got some folks over there who know the big men in that outfit and they say the stock is due for a rise. Better get yourself a little."

Rambo walked away. Marsh thought it over. Rambo had given him good information before. He had about six hundred dollars left of his twelve hundred winnings on his previous deal, and had two thousand more in hand, which was about all the money he did have. He decided the tip was a good one, and he went down to a broker's office to see about Union Consolidated. He found that stock selling at seventy-seven dollars a share, where it had lingered for weeks.

He bought five hundred shares on a five-point margin, gave the cashier his check for \$2,500 and commission and went out and took a walk.

Union Consolidated moved up fractionally and down fractionally for a week. Marsh was getting anxious. He knew his interest charge was large and he was eager to get some action. One morning, about ten days after the speculation began, he called the broker's office on the telephone.

"How's the market?" he asked.

"Pretty weak," said the clerk who answered.

"What's Union Consolidated doing?"

"It's off a point and a half."

Marsh was cold with fear. He called again in half an hour and found there was a better tone, and that Union had recovered half a point. Things were feverish still, the clerk said.

Next morning at ten o'clock, when the market opened, Marsh was on the telephone. Union opened at seventy-five and five-eighths, stayed there and dropped by eighths to seventy-five on heavy sales. Marsh was nervous. He went into a committee meeting, but could give little attention to his work. He had only three points margin left and he had no more money. At noon he found they were evidently unloading Union Consolidated, for it had dropped another point. He was tempted to close and take his loss, but hung on. He searched wildly for Rambo, but couldn't find him.

Just before three o'clock he was called to the

telephone. His broker was talking: "I'm sorry, Mr. Marsh," he said, "but I shall have to call on you for some money. Union has dropped to seventy-four, and I must ask you for more margins the first thing in the morning. Otherwise I have no option but to sell it, if it gets down lower, to protect myself."

"How much do you want?" Marsh quavered over the telephone.

"Oh, another twenty-five hundred will do. I think the worst of this is over and that the market will strengthen to-morrow, for there are evidences of support." The broker talked like a Wall Street letter. Marsh heard him dimly, like a man speaking afar off. He was thinking, wondering desperately where he would get twenty-five hundred dollars. He felt he must protect his original investment, for it would cripple him to lose it, cripple him seriously.

That night he called on Rambo at Rambo's house. "Rambo," he said, "that Union is pretty weak."

"So it is," Rambo replied unconcernedly.

"I've got to margin mine up to-morrow."

Rambo became interested.

"How much have you got?"

"Five hundred shares of seventy-seven on a five-point margin."

"My dear Marsh," said Rambo, "why speculate on so small a margin? I always protect my stuff twenty points, and then I'm reasonably safe any way she breaks."

Marsh made a clean breast of it. "I only had enough to margin it five points," he confessed.

Rambo looked at him keenly. "Then you're broke?" he asked.

"Practically."

"And they want more margins?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Five points more."

"And you want to get the money?"

"That's it."

Rambo walked around the room. "I'm sorry, Marsh," he said, "but I haven't that amount free just now. However, I know a very accommodating fellow that will let you have it on my say-so. Come around at nine o'clock in the morning and we'll go and see him."

Marsh slept badly that night. He was at Rambo's house promptly at nine and they went together to a bank, where Rambo introduced him to a man who sat in an inner office, a clean-cut, rather hard-faced man, smooth-shaven, and quick, decided and very businesslike in his actions and conversation.

"I am pleased to meet you," said the banker. "We shall be glad to do anything in our power for you."

Then he paused, waiting composedly to hear what the proposition was.

"Mr. Marsh wants to borrow a little money," said Rambo.

"We are always glad to accommodate any

friend of yours, Mr. Rambo. How much will you need, Mr. Marsh?"

"Three thousand dollars."

"Any collateral?"

"I'll indorse for him," said Rambo.

The banker sat down at his desk and filled in a printed note form. As Marsh signed it he noticed it was payable "On demand."

"It isn't for any stipulated term, I see," he said to the banker.

"Oh, no," he replied suavely. "We generally make these notes on demand, so they can be paid at any time. The interest will be five per cent. Will you kindly indorse, Mr. Rambo? Thank you. The money will be here immediately." He pushed a button, wrote his initials on the note, handed it to a clerk who came in, talked about the fine weather for a moment, and when the clerk returned handed Marsh six five-hundred-dollar bills.

"Glad to have met you, Mr. Marsh," said the banker. "I shall hope to see you often. Do not hesitate to call on us at any time. Good-morning."

"That was easy enough," commented Rambo. "Excuse me now, I've got to run over to the Land Office."

Marsh paid twenty-five hundred dollars in at the broker's office, received a statement of his account and went slowly up to the Capitol. He was uneasy, but he consoled himself with the thought that it was purely a business transaction.

IX

SQUEEZED

UNION Consolidated sagged off a point more, then a point and a half, recovered, dropped back, and finally hung round seventy-two for two or three weeks. Marsh saw Rambo occasionally and Rambo said to keep the stock, as it was good and would surely go up as he had said it would.

Work in the District of Columbia Committee was getting toward completion. The committee was threshing out the various municipal projects, favoured by the commissioners, and some put forward by private individuals who owned land here and there on the outskirts. One project was insistently favoured by a certain clique of Washingtonians; although the principals did not appear, but were represented by suave and persistent agents, who were on easy terms of familiarity with most of the older members of the committee. It provided for the location of a park in a section of the city where there were no parks, and the buying of a large block of acreage that the principals of these agents owned. It seemed a fair proposition. The land was all it was claimed to

be; the location was excellent; but there had been much opposition to the project.

Marsh noticed that certain members of the committee, who were on terms of friendship with another group of equally suave and persistent agents which although it apparently had no real estate to offer did not favour this project, insisted that the project should be passed over each time it came up. They said there was no hurry. Marsh grew interested and made a sort of a poll of the committee. The committee divided about equally. There were twenty members all told, and two were away because of sickness. This left an even number and there was an apparent tie — nine to nine. He had almost decided not to vote for the project when the question of putting it into the bill came up, regardless of what the sub-committee that had the matter in charge might recommend, for he had been warned about real-estate deals in the District.

Union Consolidated sagged down another point. He now had a loss of more than twenty-five hundred dollars, counting interest — half his money — and he was nervous. He had not seen or heard from the banker since he signed the note, and Rambo was cheerfully confident the stock would go up in time. He advised Marsh to hang on. Then one panicky day Union went down two more points, and Marsh had a loss of nearly five thousand dollars, counting charges in the total. He was getting weekly statements from his brokers, and he observed

that the interest was mounting rapidly. Union recovered two points next day and Marsh felt easier.

One morning, just before a vote on the park project, he received a form letter from the bank. It told him that the loans of the bank were being adjusted and that his loan was called. Would he kindly step in and pay his demand note for three thousand dollars? Marsh was shocked. He had written out to Morganville for money and had thought of mortgaging his house. His partner replied that collections were slow and that he wouldn't be able to send him much for a month or so.

He went down to the bank and was admitted to the inner office.

"Good-morning, Mr. Marsh," said the banker. "I am glad to see you again. How can I serve you?"

"I received this notice this morning," and Marsh handed the banker the form letter.

The banker read it slowly. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "I am sorry this occurred. Please pay no attention to it. It was sent out by a clerk in the general course of our regular loan adjustment. Please disregard it. We are only too happy to have your loan continue on our books. I shall see to it that nothing like this happens again. In a big institution like this, you know," he continued apologetically, "one is constantly harassed by subordinates' inattention to details of this kind. However, do not concern yourself, Mr. Marsh.

The money is yours as long as you desire it. Good-morning."

That afternoon there was a telephone message from the bank asking if it would be convenient for Marsh to drop in on his way down from the Capitol. He went back, rather panicky, fearful there was some mistake and that it had been decided to call his loan, and highly resolving not to be caught this way again. The banker greeted him cordially.

"I hope this hasn't inconvenienced you, Mr. Marsh," he said, "but it would hardly do for me to go up to the Capitol, you know. I meant to speak to you about an unimportant matter this morning, but it escaped my mind. It's a matter of little consequence, but one in which we are interested in a way. About that park project, you know. The fact is, Mr. Marsh, I and some of my associates own that land. We are anxious to dispose of it. It is a bargain as we offer it, and the city will be a great gainer, for a park is needed in that section. I trust you can see your way clear to vote for it."

Marsh flushed and clenched his fists. So this was it — they were buying him for three thousand dollars! "Of course," continued the banker quietly, "I merely ask this on the grounds of public benefit. If you do not think the project meritorious do not hesitate to condemn it. We shall take no offence. Only think it over. Good-afternoon."

Marsh walked out. When he reached the

street he remembered he had said nothing. He was angry, humiliated, bursting with desire to tell somebody.

As he turned the corner he saw Senator Paxton, jauntily parading along, immaculate from the shiny top of his hat to the shiny tips of his shoes, swinging a cane and looking calmly contented with life.

"Oh, senator!" shouted Marsh, "I want to talk to you."

"Walk along with me," he said. "What's on your mind?"

Marsh rushed into the story, telling it in exclamatory fashion, and Paxton listened, smiled, puffed at his cigar and stabbed at the treetrunks with his cane as they proceeded.

After Marsh had finished Paxton said: "Oh, don't take that too seriously, Marsh. You tell me yourself that, although you are against this project, you are against it only because you want to investigate it some more. There's nothing crooked about it. Of course they want to sell the land. Selling land is the principal business in this city, and the Government is the great market. The city needs a park out there. Why not take this? The price isn't exorbitant. What's the matter with it?"

"It's the method I object to," said Marsh.

"Method! My eye!" continued the senator. "What's wrong with the method? That man accommodated you. Why shouldn't you accommodate him, especially when the project is all

right? Let me tell you again that the only way to get along in this city is to be helpful yourself. He's done you a good turn. Do one for him. It commits you to nothing. If you want others to do things for you — and you will — you must do things for others. That's the only way. You can't bull your way through this game, Marsh; you've got to edge your way along the lines of least resistance. The big, bloviating, forceful person is interesting to watch; but the man who is complaisant when it's his turn is the chap who gets what he goes after. Vote to put that project in the bill. It won't hurt you and it may help you."

Next morning Union Consolidated was weak and sagged off almost a point. Marsh saw his five thousand dollars slipping from him. He attended the committee meeting and voted for the park project. His vote gave the required majority in committee.

The appropriation for the park project was included in the Sundry Civil Bill on the recommendation of the District of Columbia Committee. There was some discussion over this in the subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee that had the matter in charge, but the recommendation of the committee prevailed. Marsh wasn't comfortable. He felt he had been bribed, but he didn't know just how, and he was not entirely quiet in his mind until Union Consolidated began to go up, rose steadily to seventy-nine, when he closed out, made a small profit and

paid his note. Rambo told him he was wise. Something had gone wrong in New York, Rambo said, and it was well enough to get out, for there would be other chances. Rambo was pleased when he heard Marsh had voted for the park project. A week or two later he found that Rambo and Senator Paxton were close friends.

Mrs. Marsh's social activities took most of her time. She was assiduous in her calls, joined the various organisations of the women of the congressional set, was charming in the receiving line at the reception given by Mrs. Paxton, and when the ladies at the Bruxton gave their second reception she found many more cards in her basket than she had on the first occasion. She played bridge mornings for very small stakes in the hotel parlours, and she was a very busy woman. Her dresses were all successes. In addition to her new gowns she had bought new hats and new shoes, and Marsh was astonished at the size of her bills. However she impressed on him that she was doing it all for his advancement, and he paid as promptly as possible.

Along toward the close of the session, in July, he made a set speech on some legal and constitutional phases of a pending question. He talked for an hour and a half and held many of the members, although the afternoon was hot. He had given much time to the preparation of the speech, and was gratified to observe he had respectful attention from those who listened to him. The galleries were well filled, too, and he was con-

tented. When the speech came to him for revision before it was published in the Congressional Record the secretary sprinkled "applause" and "prolonged applause" throughout it. Marsh had him mail a great many copies of it under Marsh's frank, to constituents in all parts of his district.

The Washington newspapers carried a little of it, the Associated Press said he had been listened to "with marked attention," and the local newspaper boys from his state gave him a paragraph in their papers. Rambo said it was a fine speech, and Billy Byron, a man from Nebraska who was in his first term in the House, told him what might be a great help in overturning the iniquitous House Rules if he would join with the little band of insurgents operating even then.

One afternoon, not long afterward, he went over to the Senate to hear an important debate and sat down at a desk next to that of Senator Paxton. "I see you've been making a speech," said Paxton.

"I took a fling at it the other day," Marsh replied.

"I read it in the *Record*," continued the senator. "I observe you picked out the safe and sane specialty."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean the Constitution. That's the good old standby for the orators, perfectly innocuous, perfectly respectable and no chance for a comeback. If in doubt speak on the Constitution. It

is always there, you know, and while it has been interpreted by eloquent orators and justices and lawyers and editors and statesmen of all classes, down to the last comma, it is always susceptible of further interpretation and it is always safe. You'll never get in any trouble back home or anywhere else if you make the Constitution your specialty. Besides you'll get a reputation, for if you can comprehend any of it you will stand out above these other dubs who can comprehend none of it. Many a mediocre person — not saying you are that — has arrived at a reputation as a great statesman by getting up and defending the dear old Constitution, simply because the people who heard him and the people who wrote about him didn't know what he was talking about any more than he did, but it sounded profound and learned.

“I can point out to you half-a-dozen four-flushers in this Senate and in the House who are always referred to as great constitutional lawyers because they have hammered away at that immortal but resilient document, in speeches, interpreted it, defended it, upheld it, praised it, chanted hymns of joy over it, and all the time they were appearing in public with no comeback, you understand. There is no local politics in the Constitution, no state politics nor any factional dispute. It is there, grand, gloomy and peculiar, and you can go as far as you like with it, and get a lot of applause from people who don't know whether you are

talking sense or rubbish. Stick to the Constitution, Marsh, and you will soon be one of our leading constitutional lawyers, which is a good position to have and always makes a hit with the populace."

Marsh had been proud of his constitutional research and judgment, and he felt inclined to be angry.

"Don't get ruffled," continued Senator Paxton. "I'm only telling you facts. I'm older than you are and I've seen a great many men get along under the protecting egis of the Constitution who wouldn't have arrived anywhere if they hadn't been smart enough to pick out that harmless institution as a specialty. And another thing: Every once in a while, when there's no harm to be done to the organisation, bolt your party on a vote in the House, run off the reservation — but," he added impressively, "be sure to assign a constitutional reason for it. Never neglect that, and never do it when there is anything important on a close vote at stake. Pick out a question where there is a chance for difference, jump off, make a loud noise about it, say it pains you, but you must do it because your party is blind, insensible and otherwise callous to the constitutional aspects of the case. Say you are bolting more in sadness than in anger and on purely constitutional grounds and you'll be surprised to see what results you'll get. Besides, there is no feasible or hurtful criticism when a man is actuated in a bolt like this

on the high and holy motive of defence and regard and love, not to say reverence, for the grand old Constitution. Come on down to my committee room and smoke a cigar."

X

SOCIAL ADVANCES

THERE was no trouble about the re-nomination of Marsh that fall. The independents hadn't made up their minds about him, and thought they saw promise in him, and McManus apparently was satisfied. The convention was merely a ratification meeting. Marsh, who was waiting at an adjoining hotel, was escorted into the hall after he had been named, and made a spread-eagle speech of acceptance, which was duly cheered by the delegates who had gathered to register the will of McManus.

The campaign was more or less perfunctory, as the opposition had a factional split and two men were named. Marsh got the normal Republican vote, and a few hundred disgusted Democrats voted for him also, so his plurality was greater than it had been when he was first elected, and this was taken by everybody as a sign that he was making good. There was a hot state campaign, and Marsh was called upon to stump several adjoining districts for his party's nominee. He was a favourite with the people and drew excellent crowds.

Before the campaign was over he began to look on himself as a power in the state, and had many hours with himself in which he resented the of-course-I-control-you attitude of McManus. So far as he knew, McManus conducted his political affairs honestly and shrewdly, although he always demanded his reward, and Marsh, after thinking much about it, came to the conclusion that McManus was bound to him by no ties that could not be broken if Marsh so desired. That is, he decided McManus needed him as much as he needed McManus. He was merely getting into a frame of mind that illustrated the truth that politics is the most selfish business on earth.

Marsh did as much as he could at the law but that wasn't much, for politics kept him busy. He collected some money due him, took a retainer or two and sold a few lots he had in a subdivision of Morganville. McManus had been successful in getting a fair amount from the National Congressional Campaign Committee, and he assessed Marsh only five hundred dollars, warning him that he would have to put up twenty-five hundred dollars next time he ran. Marsh found his one session in Congress had given him a standing in his district he had not hitherto enjoyed, and he was well pleased with himself when he returned to Washington, immediately after Thanksgiving Day, for the short concluding session of his first term.

Money was uppermost in his mind, money and

how to get it. He had resorted to every device, and had been able only to come out even at the end of his first session. He had even gone to the lengths of naming Mrs. Marsh for his personal clerk, hiring a stenographer for fifty dollars a month to do the work, and pocketing the balance, a little scheme he found was in general practice among the members who had no incomes outside their salaries. He also learned that sons and daughters of influential men in the House were carried as clerks and secretaries and messengers, and he was one of the first to draw his mileage and to commute his stationery account. He had cultivated the disbursing officer, and could get an advance of a hundred dollars or so on his salary from time to time. It was nauseating business, though, this constant scheming and contriving to make his income meet his expenses, and he was eager to find ways to make money and relieve himself of the horrors of being constantly hard-up.

One thing that bothered him was Mrs. Marsh's insistence they should move from the Bruxton to a more fashionable hotel. Marsh was well satisfied with the Bruxton, although he intended to get better quarters as soon as he could manage it. Mrs. Marsh said the Bruxton was impossible, and had selected a place on an avenue where she knew the society was more select. She argued unceasingly with Marsh that she was deterred in her earnest efforts to help him to advancement in his career by her Bruxton environment;

but he, figuring on the expense, decided to wait for a time. Besides, Dorothy was finishing her school that year and would come to Washington with them next December, when Marsh would begin his second term, and that would mean an increase in expenses; for Dorothy's upkeep, aside from her simple frocks, was nothing in Morganville, as she lived with her grandmother.

The short session passed quickly. Mrs. Marsh was devoted to her calls and receptions. She had developed into a stylish, correctly attired, distinguished-looking woman, had learned much in the way of the amenities as Washington official society practises them, and was known, among those who knew her at all, as "the clever Mrs. Marsh." She had a gift of light conversation, was quick-witted, good-humoured, extremely self-confident and had developed poise. Her gowns caused Marsh some financial stress, but he was proud of her, and he managed to get her what she wanted, although he hadn't much left when all her demands were met. He worked hard in his committee and was popular with the men he met there in the House, where he knew about a hundred of the members and had a bowing acquaintance with a hundred more. Rambo continued on friendly terms, but volunteered no further stock-market information. Once or twice Marsh asked him if there was anything in sight, and Rambo each time shook his head and said the times were not propitious.

"If anything turns up that looks good I'll let

you in on it, Marsh," he said. "No use of our bucking it ourselves. Wait until we get the inside stuff."

Marsh had no pressing political worries when he reached Morganville a few days after the Congress adjourned on March fourth, and he went vigorously at his law business and had good luck. He lived quietly, asserted his authority when Mrs. Marsh decided to go to a fashionable summer hotel for July and August, and sent her and Dorothy to a small place in the mountains. He brought three thousand dollars in cash with him when he returned to Washington in November, and owed nothing in his home town save current bills. He took the three thousand dollars to the banker who had loaned him the same amount a year or so before. The banker was smilingly glad to see him. He said he had wondered what had become of him, offered him every accommodation his institution afforded and assured Marsh it was a pleasure to serve him. Marsh noticed that the banker's smile was confined to his lips. His eyes were cold and steely-grey.

Senator Paxton sent a note to Marsh and asked him to drop round when it was convenient. Marsh went immediately. He had heard, out in the district, that Paxton thought well of him and predicted a future for him, and Paxton was a greater state power than McManus.

"Marsh," said the senator, "there's a vacancy on the Public Lands Committee you can have if you want it."

"I thought I would like to stay on District of Columbia."

"Oh, that's all right, only there is no end of work to it. You can stay there, too, and you'll get up on the list, for three of the men above you are not coming back." Marsh knew this and had figured on it. He had learned length of service is what counts in attaining high committee places, that seniority is more potent than ability. The dropping out of these three men put him fourth from the bottom instead of at the bottom of the committee on the majority side.

"You see," continued the senator, "I sort of own a place on that Lands Committee—you know we are interested in land questions out our way—and I thought you might like it."

"Is the speaker willing?" asked Marsh.

Senator Paxton smiled a little, whimsical smile. "I guess he will be," he said in a matter-of-fact way.

Marsh felt he was being shoved on that Lands Committee. It didn't interest him particularly, but he felt also that his being on the committee did interest Senator Paxton greatly. As the senator had predicted, the speaker was willing to name him. Indeed, the speaker suggested it. Marsh's colleagues said he was lucky in getting two such important assignments. Marsh didn't know whether he was lucky or not. He had doubts.

The hotel question was a permanent topic of discussion between Marsh and Mrs. Marsh.

They had returned to their old rooms in the Bruxton, but they had been obliged to take an additional room for Dorothy. Mrs. Marsh had ambitious plans for Dorothy. She intended to put her in the most fashionable school for young ladies in the city, where, she said, "she can meet and associate with the daughters of exclusive people." Marsh knew all along there would be but one compromise on the hotel question, and that that would be to do as Mrs. Marsh was insisting, so he gave in. They moved to a hotel on an avenue where they rented two rooms and a bath, not so comfortable as those they had at the Bruxton, for \$300 a month instead of \$200, with an additional charge for Dorothy.

Then came the school problem. Mrs. Marsh had made a study of that. Washington had many schools for girls ranging from one so high-priced that it was patronised only by daughters of very rich men down to less pretentious ones, where the tuition was but \$500 a year.

"But five hundred?" said Marsh, when Mrs. Marsh mentioned this sum to him deprecatingly. "For Heaven's sake, isn't that enough to pay a year for any girl's education?"

Dorothy thought it was too much. She was not keen about finishing at a "finishing" school. She was a girl of good spirit and good sense, and she said she'd just as soon stay in Morganville as be cooped up in a seminary and taught to play the piano and to talk French. She said she hated the piano and loathed French, and she liked to be

with her grandmother if she couldn't be with her father, whom she adored.

Mrs. Marsh was shocked. "But my dear Dorothy," she protested, "think of the opportunities this will give you to meet the daughters of the best families, and to fit yourself for the position you are to assume?"

Dorothy pouted. "I don't see how it will help papa any to stick me away in one of those horrid schools and fill me full of things I don't want to know."

"Anyhow," declared Mrs. Marsh, "you are going. That's settled."

However, Dorothy didn't go to the school Mrs. Marsh had selected. Marsh had a talk with Cragston, a rich member from the East who had two daughters in school in Washington.

"Don't be fooled by that thousand-dollar-a-year stuff, Marsh," cautioned Cragston. "The thousand is only the beginning. It pays for tuition and board and room. About everything else is extra. It costs me about five thousand a year for my two girls up there. And, believe me, they are being finished in a way that will cost me a good many thousands more than that after the final touches have been applied."

Marsh said he couldn't afford it. Dorothy stood boldly by and said she didn't want him to afford it. A compromise was reached, and Dorothy went to a school, not so fashionable as the other, but still fashionable enough to cost six hundred dollars a year, with extras that would

make the total reach about a thousand. She started late. Next year, Mrs. Marsh declared, she would have to be in Washington for the school opening.

After the organisation of the House had been perfected and the Christmas holidays were over—the Marshes stayed in Washington instead of going to Morganville—the first call was issued for a meeting of the Public Lands Committee and Marsh attended to get acquainted with his associates. They were mostly Western men, men who were concerned with the questions affecting the public domain, and the bulk of them had been several terms in Congress and knew all the ropes. They all greeted Marsh kindly, especially Rambo, who was the second man on the list, ranking next to the chairman, and, as Marsh soon learned, a power in the affairs of the committee. Rambo spent several afternoons with Marsh, outlining possible land legislation, and was deeply concerned over the revision of several of the existing land laws, which, he said, were unfair both to the settlers and to the Government. He argued there was entirely too much red tape about land matters, and especially about patenting land claims, and was in favour of a less restricted system, whereby the public domain might be easier of access and settlers would not be so hampered by a multiplicity of detail. Rambo said the land laws had been changed and amended and confused until the practice under them, in the Interior Department, gave too much

power to the Commissioner of the Public Land Office. Marsh was not particularly interested, but he listened politely to all Rambo said and decided to look into the subject when he had time.

One day Marsh was talking with Senator Paxton, and the name of a former senator, who was practising law in Washington, and who represented certain diversified interests that had matters of concern before Congress, was mentioned.

"I suppose," remarked Marsh casually, "he is a crook."

"Hold on, Marsh!" said the senator. "Don't fall into that loose manner of speaking about others here in Washington. A man may practise law as legitimately here as in Morganville, and as illegitimately, too, if it comes to that. The mere fact that a man does practise law in Washington, that he has been in Congress and that he does represent clients who are interested in what Congress is doing, does not make him crooked any more than it makes him a Mohammedan. It is so common a custom to call a man who does not agree with you a crook that it is almost universal. You see, we all predicate the total honesty of the world on the honesty we personally assign to ourselves. We all think we are honest — think we are — except in rare cases when we have reached the sublimity of philosophical maturity and cease trying to fool ourselves. Therefore, inasmuch as we are honest, according to our own estimation, we also think any

man who does not agree with us is dishonest, a crook, and we say so in many instances without any knowledge of the facts, or any other kind of basis except our own egotistical self-appraisalment.

“It is one of the cheapest tricks of the demagogue and the hypocrite — and we have scores of them here as there are scores of them everywhere — to try to discredit opposition by saying opponents are crooks and liars. We assume all the virtues ourselves. We refuse to allow any who disagree with us credit for any honesty of opinion or honesty of practice. This vaunted civilisation of ours, Marsh, is carried on by two sets of people. The first consists of a large section of the populace who are insistent you shall do what they want you to do; and the second is you yourself, equally insistent that all others shall do what you want them to do. In the struggle it always falls out that each side — all others and yourself — do not get others to do what you want them to do, nor do you do what you want to do yourself. No man gets any other to do what he wants that other to do, but every man unceasingly, from the cradle to the grave, does what others want him to do, never what he wants to do himself.

“Failing to recognise this great truth, we persist in our opinions, and when we find a man who persists against those opinions we seek to demolish him by calling him a crook — not because he is a crook, mind you, but because he opposes what we want, we being, in our opinions, immacu-

lately honest. Now it is the same here. It is the common custom to speak of men as crooked because they have an opportunity to be crooked or because we think they have that opportunity. You said that man was crooked, and you didn't stop to reflect that the only reason on this earth that gives him a chance to be crooked is his opportunity. And that opportunity, if it does exist, exists because we are crooked ourselves, for what business can a crook do with honest men? If he is a successful crook, the men he deals with must be crooks also, and we are the men he deals with — you and I and the other members of this Congress. He doesn't steal anything, for example — he has no power to steal anything; but if anything is stolen we steal it for him, at his request or for a share of the swag."

"Well," said Marsh doggedly, "I heard he is a lobbyist."

"Lobbyist! Faugh!" snorted the senator. "That word always makes me tired. There may have been times in this city when there were lobbyists who could lobby, but those times are gone. If you could gather all the so-called lobbyists in this city into statuary hall you would find the whole bunch of them haven't as much influence on Congress as one of the marble effigies there. They are legislative hangers-on, cheaper than messengers, who seek to sell their supposed acquaintance and influence with legislators to unsophisticated come-ons who want favours from Congress. Most of them could not get into the

office of a senator or a representative, certainly not into the office of a senator or representative who knows the game, and they have about as much real effect on American legislation as on the Russian Duma. They slither in and slither out, and hang about hotels and cadge money and it is all a confidence game both ways. It is cheap and nasty and predicated on the widespread belief that legislation can be bought."

"Do you mean to say legislation cannot be bought?" asked Marsh, who felt he was being politely rebuked.

"Certainly legislation can be bought, and legislation can be obtained by influence, but legislation cannot be bought by the raw passing of money. There are some men in this Congress who would take a bribe — take the money — but not many. Intrinsically, the majority of these men here are straight that way. Most of them would kick you out of their rooms if you tried to hand them money — most of them, not all. That isn't the way legislation is bought, nor is it the way individuals are bought. The real lobbyists, the men who buy legislation or get it without buying it — sometimes — work another way. They are not former members or former senators or former anythings. They are the real, live big-heads of the big interests who want legislation. And they don't work with the individual members. They work through the organisation. They apply their political knowledge. They get the bosses. The bosses get the rest of the crowd,

“When anything important is going on here you don’t find these former congressmen in any capacity other than errand boys, these lobbyists you speak about. You do find on the spot the biggest men in the interest affected. They come here. They deal with the men who control the Senate and the House. They help maintain the organisation, and they pick out here and there a man who is important and influential and get him. He gets the others. The rank and file are not dishonest, for one great reason if for no other — they haven’t the chance. The big fellows deal with the big fellows and the rank and file take their orders, and there you are.”

“Then it’s largely political,” said Marsh.

“It’s entirely political. Everything in Washington is political. Politics is first in all legislation, and all others considerations — the people, the country, everything else — are trailing along way behind. We legislate for one purpose only, and that one purpose is to maintain ourselves and our party in power. Every bit of legislation has a political end to it, even the getting of an eight-dollar pension. The men in Congress have one great, imperative interest — to stay in Congress themselves and keep their party in power in Congress and in the White House. All legislation is directed to that end. Thus when a big interest is affected by any proposed legislation that big interest has learned not to try to deal with individuals, but to deal with the heads of the organisation that controls the individuals, the

organisation that must be maintained because it in turn maintains the individuals and helps them maintain themselves."

"Where do the people come in?" asked Marsh.

"They do not come in. When you get down to bed-rock, despite all the yawp and yammer about the people and despite the public parading of love for the same by the men in Congress, you discover that the people, the real people for whom legislation is passed, consist of two senators from each state and whatever number of representatives there may be. They are the people. The rest of the population of their state is a means to their ends. These others are necessary for voting purposes, but the prime necessity in the case consists in directing their purposes so they will vote for the persons who are legislating, in order that those persons may continue legislating — and those persons, meaning the members of Congress, legislate first with eyes single to how the legislation will affect their individual political fortunes, how it will delude the people into continuing their support, and their legislation is framed for no other purpose. If the people derive any incidental or accidental benefit all well and good. But if the legislator wants to remain in power he is actuated by no higher motive than that. Popularity means power. Hence he does what seems the politic, the popular thing in order to help himself. Occasionally there comes a man who fights out in the open for what he thinks

the people should have, regardless of his own fortunes; but there are not many of them and they do not last long. I hope I'm not boring you."

"Go on," said Marsh.

"The chief evil of every political system, not only in this country but in all the world, is not dishonesty, but hypocrisy — this eternal pretence of legislating for the people, when we are legislating for ourselves first, and the people get only the crumbs of it. Occasionally the people take matters in their own hands and do some legislating with axes and the torch, but not often. They are too much concerned with getting enough to eat and to wear and with keeping warm to look into politics, except emotionally and spasmodically; and when they overturn an organisation they forget what the system produced, and look hopefully for new results from the organisation they have put in power. They do not remember the men who are in power are exactly the same, in every human attribute, as those they put out of power, and after the preliminary splutter will strive to continue in power and place just as their predecessors did. The people get an advantage by the overturn of a party, and then fail to press it. They quit in the middle of their work. The politicians understand this, and it is not a matter of such terrifying moment for a party to be beaten, for the leaders know the pendulum swings back and forth, because the swinging machinery, the people, forget how they regulated things and substitute hope for continued watchfulness."

XI

THE BOLT

MARSH thought much about what Senator Paxton had said, and his own views coincided with the observations of that experienced person. He had already discovered that with the other members of Congress the most potent argument for legislation, for appropriations, for the passage of private claims and for voting on general bills was: "It will help me in my district." Man after man came to him and asked him to vote for or against various propositions on that ground—personal aid for the asker in his home district. Back of that was the party obligation. "Rally, boys!" the leader said. "The organisation wants it. It is for the party."

Moreover he found that men frequently opposed bills publicly, and even went to the length of speaking against them, when they privately urged the passage of those measures because of some influence that was powerful but not popular back home or at large. He was often urged to vote for a bill on the ground that it wouldn't hurt him any to support it, by men who loudly and impressively voted against it. He had noticed

also that members dodged votes, staying out of committees on various pretences when a matter dangerous politically was under consideration, and resorting to all sorts of petty subterfuges to keep their records clear and in accord with popular temper as they understood it, or at least neutral or inoffensive, so there might not be criticism at home, or if there were criticism that it might be answered successfully or plausibly and with no loss of prestige.

He had voted uniformly with the organisation on party measures, but he resolved to take an independent stand on some bill, trusting in his rather inflated estimate of his own power as an orator to pull him through. He decided to prove to the country he was no hypocrite and a true friend of the people, and to rush to heights of respect and confidence by that process. His opportunity came sooner than he expected. A bill that gave him a chance was dropped in the basket by a Western member and referred to the Lands Committee. It was a bill that involved the illegality of a land grab in the West.

A certain corporation composed of powerful men had fenced in a large tract of public domain and used it for grazing purposes. The corporation had been unmolested for years and had come to look on the land as its own property. A zealous young man in the Interior Department had exposed the swindle and had made a report on it. This was published, and there was a demand that the land be returned to the

Government. The officials were not particularly eager to stir up the men who had seized the land, but they had to proceed. The result was, after a long delay and a lot of backing and filling, a bill was introduced that practically gave the land to the corporation and removed the illegality of their seizure. It was cunningly worded and seemed to have much precedent behind it. There were many committeemen who favoured it, including Rambo, who was ardently for it.

Marsh had had experience in land cases and he studied the bill carefully. He talked about it with other members of his committee, and discovered the general feeling was that it would be advisable to rush the bill through before there was much chance for critical publicity, and get it over to the Senate, where the fencers had strong support, or to smother the matter, pigeonhole the bill and trust to time and the leaders to bring the Interior Department round to a reasonable frame of mind. Byron, the member from Nebraska who had insurgent tendencies, was on the Lands Committee also, and he had been looking into this bill. Marsh talked with him.

"It's a steal," said Byron, "a rank steal. These men have no right to that land, never did have any right to it, and now they are trying to establish a claim that is a swindle on the face of it. I'm against it."

"How far will you go?" asked Marsh.

"To the limit," Byron replied emphatically. "I intend to oppose the bill in committee and do

what I can to beat it. Unfortunately my attitude toward the oligarchy that rules this House is so well known that my opposition will probably have the tendency of bringing an early and favourable report on the bill. They're hazing me, you know."

"Hazing you?"

"Sure! They can't get me with any of the old lures, and they are trying to break my back and my spirit by opposing everything I am interested in, and otherwise making it uncomfortable for me. And let me tell you, Marsh, they are past-masters at that art."

"Will you join with me in trying to beat the bill?" asked Marsh.

"I'll not only join you, but I'll follow you," promised Byron. "If we can get another member or two we can make a showing and perhaps stop it by making such a yell that the newspapers will take it up."

"We'll talk about it again to-morrow," said Marsh. "I feel the same way you do about it and I think we should fight it."

Next day Marsh and Byron had another conversation. They found that Rochester, also a Western member of the committee, had grave misgivings about this bill, and they filled him with their ideas and secured his tentative assent to help them. Byron and Marsh talked long about the matter. It was decided Marsh should take the initiative against the bill in the committee, and that Byron and Rochester would back him up.

One morning, in a committee meeting, the chairman of the committee said casually: "Gentlemen of the committee, here is a little bill that we might as well dispose of. It has reference to some fencing operations out West by some men, who, as I understand it, thought they were fully within their rights. There has been a fuss about it and this bill is designed to set these men straight in the matter. It is of little moment. Shall we report it favourably and recommend its passage?"

"I move that this committee present a favourable report on this bill and recommend it for passage," said Rambo.

"I second that," put in another.

"All in favour of the motion signify by saying aye, contrary-minded no," rattled the chairman.

"The ayes —"

Marsh arose from his seat at the end of the table.

"Mr. Chairman!"

The chairman looked at Marsh with an expression of pained surprise. He recognised Marsh in a manner that indicated the chairman was firmly of the opinion this new member was projecting himself in an unwarranted manner into the proceedings of the committee.

"Mr. Chairman," said Marsh, "I ask that that bill go over."

There was a chorus of protest from the older members of the committee.

"I insist," continued Marsh, "that this bill shall go over. It has had no consideration in this

committee that I know about, and I am well within my rights when I say I desire to examine into it and request that action shall not be precipitate. This is an important bill. In my opinion it is a wicked bill."

The older members of the committee looked virtuous as possible. The chairman of the committee was still shocked and pained.

"I insist, Mr. Chairman, that bill shall go over, and I make that motion."

"I second it," said Byron.

"Vote!" shouted one or two members.

"Of course," declaimed the chairman in his most impressive manner, "there is no desire on the part of this committee or any of its members to rush through a bill without giving every member ample opportunity to state his objections. Will twenty-four hours be sufficient time for study for the gentleman?"

"Ample," said Marsh.

"Very well, the bill will go over for a day, but to-morrow I shall demand a vote on it."

Most of the older members looked curiously at Marsh and wondered what he had in mind. After the committee meeting adjourned Rambo came to him.

"What's up, Marsh?" he asked.

"That's a rotten bill, that's what's up; and I'm not going to stand for rushing it through this committee and out on the floor of the House. I've got some things to say about it and I'm going to say them."

"But," said Rambo, "the boys want it. It doesn't hurt you any and it helps some of our very good friends. Better forget it. What difference does it make to you?"

"It makes this difference, Rambo," Marsh retorted hotly. "I know that bill condones an offence against our laws. It practically gives that land to the men who stole it years ago. They have no right to it now, never have had a right to it, and I intend to fight for the restoration of the land to the public domain where it belongs."

Rambo whistled.

"Marsh," he said, "you've had a good start in this House. Don't run out on a little thing like this and gum yourself all up before you get into the game. Forget this, I tell you, and I'm telling you for your own good. If you don't like the bill stay away from the meeting when it is considered, or come in, make your spiel, and take your medicine without exposing yourself to the whole outside world as a kicker. I tell you the powers are for this bill. Do you get that? The organisation wants it. Keep off now and play the game. It doesn't hurt you—not a bit. You can't prevent its report with a favourable recommendation, and you can't stop it from going through the House. All you'll do will be to excite suspicion about your dependableness in the minds of the men who at present think well of you. Don't ruin yourself this way. I'm talking to you now for your own good. Forget it."

"I've decided to fight it," said Marsh.

"Oh, well," said Rambo, walking away, "that part of it is up to you. You will only hurt yourself and not harm the bill, you know. It will be reported and passed. That's all arranged, and you will get a devil of a licking, and a humiliating one, and hurt yourself for years to come."

"I'll take my chances with the people," said Marsh vehemently.

Rambo laughed. "The people won't have much to say about it," he called back over his shoulder.

The chairman called up the bill promptly next day, after the committee met, and looked inquiringly at Marsh. Marsh saw there was a full committee present. Every member was on hand. He wondered about that, for most committee meetings were slimly attended. He did not know the chairman and Rambo had notified everybody to be there that morning to help squelch this bumptious young person who had the temerity to protest against a committee action that was favoured by nearly all the members.

Marsh rose. The question was on the favourable report of the bill and the recommendation for passage.

He spoke for half an hour, carefully going into the history of the land operations referred to in the bill, showing how the land had been fenced illegally, and how after many years the matter had been made public officially. He deprecated any connivance on the part of the committee with this larceny of public domain, referred feelingly

to the rights of the people in the matter and was eloquent and forceful. It was a good speech. Byron backed him up in a fifteen-minute talk.

The members of the committee sat smoking, looking rather bored, and when Marsh had finished with the threat that he would present a minority report on the bill, disclose its iniquity to the country and make a fight on the floor of the House, they grinned. After Byron had finished the chairman asked if any other member of the committee had anything to say. He was rather contemptuous about it. No other member said anything, except Rambo, who cried: "Vote!"

The vote was taken and a favourable report on the bill was ordered, with every member in the affirmative except Marsh, Byron and Rochester, who wavered a bit, but finally joined Marsh and Byron. The remaining business was quickly transacted and the committee adjourned.

"Take your medicine, Marsh," admonished Rambo, as they walked out of the room.

That afternoon Senator Paxton strolled over to the House, went in and sat down beside Marsh, who was listening to a debate on an appropriation bill. Marsh saw him coming and braced himself for the encounter.

Paxton was genial and affable. He apparently didn't have a care in the world. He teetered back and forth in the chair he had taken and nodded to Marsh.

"I just happened by and thought I'd revisit the scenes of my former triumphs," he said.

"Haven't seen much of you lately. How are you?"

"Fine," Marsh replied; "but pretty busy."

Paxton smiled again. "It seems," he said pleasantly, "that I didn't do such a stroke of business after all when I got you a place on the Lands Committee."

"What do you mean?" Marsh asked, his face hardening.

"Oh," the senator replied, as if it were a matter of slight consequence, "I imagined you were regular and would play the game. They tell me you're kicking against a bill that is calculated to help some very good friends of ours out of a hole."

"It's a dishonest bill."

"Tush, tush, Marsh!" said Paxton gently. "Remember what I told you about branding things dishonest simply because you don't agree with them. That's too cheap for you. Now, as I understand it, the Government hasn't had this land for years and these fellows intend to straighten it all out. They are friends of ours, you know, and it is up to us to help them. What do you intend to do?"

"I shall make a minority report on the bill and carry my fight to the floor of the House."

"Marsh," said the senator, "did you ever by any chance watch one of those big steamrollers at work fixing the asphalt in this town? Well, my son, you'll look and feel as if one of those rollers—the biggest one—had run over you and

squashed you into tar by the time they get through with you."

"That makes no difference to me," protested Marsh. "I feel it my duty to oppose this bill."

"Far be it from me to interfere with your sense of duty in this trifling matter further than to suggest that there is a higher duty concerned than you seem to have discovered. I refer to your duty to yourself, to your career, to your stay in public life. This bill is an unimportant matter and the organisation is for it —"

"I fail to see why it is so unimportant when all the machinery of this Congress seems to be moving to get it through," said Marsh.

"Oh, well," smiled Paxton, "it's all in the viewpoint, of course. If you think you cannot possibly exist without getting a little notoriety out of your opposition to this bill I don't know that anything I can say will prevent you from taking the jump. I merely wanted to warn you that it will be held up against you. The organisation doesn't forget."

"I'll take my chances," said Marsh.

"Well and good, only why not leave the reservation on something that's worth while? Why piddle around on this little bill instead of grabbing a big issue?"

"This is big enough. It has the whole machine back of it."

"Good luck to you," said Paxton cheerily, as he rose to go. "I'll come over to hear your speech. I suppose you are going to make a speech?"

"I surely am," replied Marsh, and Paxton walked jauntily away.

Byron and Rochester joined Marsh in a vigorous minority report on the bill, a report that condemned it unsparingly. The majority report was brief. It recommended the passage of the bill, but gave no special reason except that the committee thought the measure just and equitable. The bill went on the calendar, and one afternoon was called up by the chairman of the committee. Marsh had been preparing himself. He had worked hard over a speech and he was ready. He moved the substitution of the minority for the majority report, and the question came on the substitution. Three hours were allotted for debate, an hour and a half to each side, and Marsh rose.

He was in fine form. He had determined to make a great effort. Word had gone out that the majority was squabbling over a bill, and there was a good attendance of members, while the press gallery held a large number of correspondents who had come in to see if there was an interesting paragraph in this fight of a young member against the organisation. He spoke for his full hour and a half. He explained the bill, showed its illegality, went into the history of landgrabbing in the West, scored the landgrabbers, was cautious in his references to the committee, but made it plain enough that the organisation was for the bill for political reasons, because the landgrabbers were strong politically, and his peroration was the best

thing he had ever done. It was eloquent, but not flowery. It was delivered with much dramatic force and with all the elocutionary graces at his command.

The House was filled and the press gallery crowded. Marsh's references to the dangers he was braving, dangers of opposition from the organisation of his own party, were loudly cheered, by the minority especially when he exclaimed fervently that he knew he was right, and that he was content to leave his case in the hands of the highest court — the people.

The chairman of the committee used only fifteen minutes of his time, explaining the bill and laying stress on the fact that all but three members of the committee were for it, as the report showed. Then he asked for the question.

There was a demand for a division and tellers were appointed. Although a good many of the Democrats voted with Marsh on the broad, general theory that it is always good politics to help along discord in the opposition, Marsh rallied only a dozen members of his own party and was overwhelmingly defeated. The majority report was adopted and the House went into consideration of the bill. Debate was perfunctory and the bill was passed without a division. Marsh left soon after his defeat. Rambo caught up with him in the corridor.

"Well," said Rambo, "you see what happened. That sets you back into the nine hole all right."

"I don't give a damn!" exclaimed Marsh.

“ But you will in a week or so,” insisted Rambo; “ after you wake up.”

Marsh was well pleased with himself next morning. The Washington correspondents of the big papers in his state had been to see him and had sent out stories praising him for his fight, and the Washington papers gave a column each to it. Marsh's particular newspaper friend told him the correspondents had handled the story quite generously, and when the New York papers came Marsh saw they each had dispatches on it, ranging in length from a quarter of a column in the papers that supported the Administration to a full column in the opposition papers.

Nevertheless, many of his friends in the organisation told him he had ruined himself by his protest, and as the newspaper mention of his fight ceased in the news columns on the second day, he was rather downcast and wondered if he had made a mistake. A few days later the press-clipping bureaus began to send him clippings of the editorial comments on the fight throughout the country, and he took heart again. He was almost universally supported and commended for his stand.

XII

A LITTLE DINNER PARTY

MRS. MARSH had been in the members' gallery in the House on the day her husband made his speech, and was much elated over his success as an orator, although downcast because of the trifling results he obtained. She regained her confidence when she read the newspaper clippings, and quoted to her friends several of the editorial paragraphs that referred to Marsh as a "sturdy and independent young member who will make his mark" as if she had inspired the whole proceeding. The fact was she had advised against it on the one occasion when Marsh took her into his confidence. Mrs. Marsh was already experienced enough in Washington affairs to know the value of regularity, and she was slavish in her observance of the social conventions.

The Marshes had found the new hotel to be stiffer and more formal than the Bruxton, which simply denoted, to the mind of Mrs. Marsh, that it was advanced socially over the Bruxton, and she cultivated assiduously the women who lived in the hotel. There were several wives of senators there, and the wives of representatives she met in

the hotel were distinctly more fashionable than those at the other place. They had given a reception or two, and Mrs. Marsh was planning one for herself. She had assisted at another of Mrs. Paxton's affairs, this time not a state function, and she felt she was gradually coming into her own.

She was firm in her conviction that the future of Marsh lay largely in her hands, and she was determined to push him forward by pushing herself forward. She had heard stories of extremely clever wives who had advanced the positions of their husbands by their genius at entertaining, their knowledge of politics and their skill at getting influential persons at work, and she resolved to emulate these shining examples. People told her of the wife of one of the army officers, who had not only kept her husband stationed in Washington on departmental duty for ten years, but had secured several promotions for him, because she was smart enough to cultivate the wives of his superiors socially and to pay assiduous court to those who could help her in her campaign and could recommend her husband for promotion and detached duty. They related instances of social influence that had reached the White House even, and told tales of dinners where great men gathered at charming boards and discussed affairs of state, while the hostess advanced her husband because of what she came to know and the information she could give him of forthcoming events.

All this was sweet music to the ears of Mrs.

Marsh, who felt she was capable of just as much as any woman who lived in Washington. She had faith in her husband. She was thoroughly selfish about it, however, for she had no idea of remaining in the background. She resolved to triumph with her husband. She would be the great Mrs. Marsh, the wife of the great Mr. Marsh. She was talking on this strain one afternoon to Mrs. Lyster, a sweet and motherly woman, the wife of a senator, who had lived in Washington for twenty years, and who preferred books to society, and the companionship of a few other women of her own age to the general rout, although she was punctilious in her observance of those social duties that devolved upon her.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lyster, "I have heard those stories ever since I have been in Washington, and I have no doubt that some of them are true. But I have found it to be the general rule that a wife, in this atmosphere, can best help her husband by taking care of him rather than by trying to advance him. If a woman keeps her husband in a cheerful frame of mind, looks after his comfort, sees that he is well fed and mothers him, she will do more toward advancing him than she will by intriguing through social efforts or otherwise."

Mrs. Marsh looked shocked.

"I am quite well aware," continued Mrs. Lyster comfortably, "that this isn't the present-day view or the Washington view, but it has been my experience that in most cases these strivings on the part of wives to advance their husbands are not

so much for the sake of the husband as for the sake of the wife. I mean by that that the wife is ambitious to shine socially, and that her opportunity for shining increases in exact ratio to the luminous qualities of her husband. I guess, when you figure it out, that the woman who is advancing her husband thinks twice about her own consequent advancement to once of what she is doing for her husband. She works for herself through him."

"Why, Mrs. Lyster!" exclaimed Mrs. Marsh; "I don't think that is true. I know, for example, I am thoroughly unselfish in the case of James. I shall be content to remain in the background if he can succeed, and I shall do all I can to help him. That is my sole idea."

Mrs. Lyster smiled comfortably again. "Of course, my dear," she said, "I know you are the exception. But what I want to say is this: A woman can't help a man do anything that is a man's to do. She can keep him comfortable, air his bed, see to his linen and his meals, preserve his cheerfulness, but his work is his own work and she can't help him. She may push him forward a little, but unless he has it in him to keep ahead she cannot hold him there for any length of time.

"No, a woman can't help a man do anything he has to do as a man; but there is one thing she can do — she can make him feel his dependence on her. It makes no difference how much a man may be praised, how many may flatter him for some accomplishment or some speech or some action, if the one woman says: 'Oh, piffle!' when

he comes to her, all the rest of the adulation counts for nothing. Conversely, if everybody condemns and the one woman tells him it is well, that he has succeeded, despite the almost universal verdict he walks down the street with his chest thrown out and his head high in the air, for nothing else matters. That, I assume," she concluded, "is heresy in the present day, and especially in the present Washington day, but it is my opinion. Shall we have some tea?"

Mrs. Marsh did not tell her husband of the old-fashioned views of Mrs. Lyster, although she did remark that she considered Mrs. Lyster archaic in her ideas.

"Why?" asked Marsh. "I thought her an extremely cultured woman."

"Oh," said Mrs. Marsh, dismissing the subject, "she has a curious, old-fashioned viewpoint."

Marsh was living from hand to mouth. He had just about enough money to pay his current expenses, which included some rather heavy dress bills of Mrs. Marsh's. He thought one or twice of taking a flyer in the stock market, but he was deterred by his lack of knowledge of inside conditions. Rambo was polite, but made no advances. Marsh felt he had alienated Rambo as well as Senator Paxton by his action on the land bill, and was greatly surprised one morning to find in his mail an invitation from the leader of the Senate asking Marsh to dine with him. Marsh couldn't understand that. He went over to the Senate and asked Senator Paxton what it meant.

"It means he wants you to have dinner with him, I should gather from the general tenor of the invitation," said Paxton.

"But why?"

"Lordy! Lordy!" laughed Paxton, "have you got into that condition of mind where you suspect an ulterior motive in everything that happens in Washington? Surely your well-known independent principles"—there was a gentle sarcasm about this that made Marsh wince—"do not preclude your breaking bread with the leader of the Senate, who is not only a fine fellow but a wonderful host."

"Of course not," stammered Marsh; "only —"

"Oh, my son," broke in the senator, "do not take yourself so seriously. If he didn't want to meet you and have you there he wouldn't ask you. He isn't trying to put anything over on you. You are one of a company. Do you know," he continued, after a pause wherein he laughed frankly at Marsh, "I have never been able to understand why it is when a man in public life begins to think he is out crusading to get or restore some rights for the people, when he thinks he has a brief for the great toiling masses, that he immediately loses all sense of perspective, all sense of humour, and becomes as serious as the multiplication table is to a small boy, and that is the most serious thing we know."

"What is there about this uplift propaganda that sets the eyes of the uplifters, changes them from reasonable human beings to fanatics who

continually cry out against everybody who does not agree with them, and urges them to arrogate all the honesty and all the pureness of motive to themselves? Why does the man who takes up the cause of the people become so intense an egoist that he cannot see any good in anybody but himself? What's the matter with them that life so suddenly assumes so sombre a hue, that the blue goes out of the sky, the colour out of the flowers, the warmth out of the sun, and all is lost save for them, by them and in them? Is it a disease or is it a pose that goes with that particular game?"

"I hadn't thought of it that way," said Marsh stiffly.

"Of course not, for you are beginning to think you are an uplifter yourself. For Heaven's sake get down to earth! It may be that we organisation fellows are villains — it may be, I say — certainly the uplifters claim we are, but I'll let you in on one thing, and that is that we're cheerful, human, interesting villains and a darned sight better lot of fellows than the crowd you are preparing to train with, and that goes for every human attribute, too, even if some of us can't see that the country is going to wreck and ruin because we are in power. It isn't necessary to be a grouch or a recluse, just because you think you are a fine, young inspired crusader, although most of you are both. And it isn't necessary to associate exclusively with your own kind, which seems to be the rule, although I must confess that it is only

among your own kind you'll find persons who will take you as seriously as you take yourselves, which may be the reason. Of course you'll accept the invitation. You'll find a lot of good fellows there, men worth knowing, whether you agree with them or not. I'm going myself."

Marsh accepted. When he told Mrs. Marsh she was much cast down because it was to be a man's dinner and she couldn't go, but, she asserted, she was quite certain the reason Marsh was invited was because she had called twice on the host's wife, and had received cards from her, via her footman, on a reception day at their hotel.

Mrs. Marsh was feeling her responsibilities. She had early learned the value of publicity, and kept in constant communication with the society editors of the various papers in Washington, sending them minute accounts of her various activities, which they generally printed along with columns of other details sent in by other equally ambitious women. Once, through the friendly intervention of a woman who knew the society editor of a Sunday paper, she had had her picture printed, with the pictures of several other ladies, on Sunday morning in the society page, as "one of the charming hostesses at the Dewilton Hotel." She bought fifty copies of the paper and sent them to people in Morganville, which might have had something to do with the printing of the picture, although she never thought of that.

The dinner was rather important. There were about thirty guests — senators, House leaders, a

cabinet-member or two and half a dozen big business men from New York, mostly connected with financial interests, who seemed to know everybody there but Marsh and one or two others of as recent date as he was. The host lived in a great house on a fashionable street, the service was perfect, the food all that could be desired and the wines beyond criticism. To the great astonishment of Marsh no politics was talked at the dinner. There was only a general conversation. Two or three of the guests were good story tellers, and were eagerly besought to retail their stock of anecdotes. The laughter became a little heartier along toward the close of the dinner, but that was the only evidence of the effect of the wine. Marsh sought a chance, and during a lull told a funny story himself. He was instantly hailed as an advantageous adjunct to the party, urged to tell more stories, which he did, having a stock of them and knowing how to bring out the points, and when the dinner was over and they had gone to the library to smoke their second cigars before leaving, the host brought up the New York business men and introduced them to Marsh, mentioning him as "a brilliant young Republican from the West." He also met several senators he had not met before.

There was an air of good fellowship over it all. One of the New York business men had a voice and sang lively songs. A senator, of whom Marsh had been reading for years as one of the party leaders and a great power, recited a long

humorous poem with great declamatory effect, and Marsh found to his astonishment that these men joked and joshed one another on affairs and projects and policies he considered of the gravest import, and larked about as if there were no such place as the Capitol. The man who could get the stiffest joke on another man was the momentary hero, and there was no regard for feelings, no deference to dignity.

Marsh had expected there would be speeches and had prepared himself for a five-minutes talk, thinking he might be called upon — rather expecting it, in fact, in view of his recent big speech; and he was disappointed when the senator who afterward recited the humorous poem, as soon as they were seated at dinner called to the host: "Look here, Charley, how about it? No speeches, I take it?"

"Not a speech," the host replied.

The senator who asked the question rose at his place and said: "Gentlemen, you have heard the decision. No speeches. A vote of thanks is in order."

"Let's drink to his health, and may he never break this rule at his dinners," said another.

So they drank to that proposition with cheers, but Marsh felt that he had been deprived of an opportunity.

The New York business men chatted with him for a few minutes. They talked on general topics. They said they hoped they might be better acquainted, and were pleasant and affable and did

not look like custodians of the fearsome Money Demon at all. In fact they appeared to be clean-cut, affable, modest men, not ogres or predaceous plutocrats. Not one of them looked like Marsh's preconceived ideas of a Captain of High Finance. Marsh told his wife, when he reached the hotel, he had had a very pleasant evening.

A week or so later Senator Paxton gave a dinner and asked Marsh. There were fourteen guests, four of the same business men from New York who had dined with the Senate leader and the remainder senators and representatives. Several members besides Marsh who had been at the previous dinner were there. The amusement after dinner was poker. Two games, seven at a table, were organised. Marsh felt nervous over this, for he had little money to lose and he imagined the game would be a big one. He soon discovered that the mere fact that a man is a millionaire doesn't necessarily mean he is either a prodigal or a producer at poker. The richest men played most cautiously, and were derided by the poorer ones for holding the cards so close. The game was five-dollar limit, all jack-pots, with the dealer anteing each time. When four of a kind were held there was a round of "roodles," which meant the limit was increased to ten dollars on that round.

Marsh knew poker fairly well, and he decided to take no long chances, but to play his cards for no more than they were worth and to watch things carefully. He had heard stories of poker games

in Washington where innocent members were inveigled in and bribed by crafty villains who lost large sums to them by betting on small hands. He wondered if that was the plot for him, but he soon found nobody in that gathering had any intention of giving any money to him unless he had the cards to take it with, and mostly when he called what he thought was a bluff he found his opponent had the cards to justify his faith and his money. It was a noisy, lively game, with the players joking one another and telling stories, and it closed promptly at midnight. Each man had been handed a hundred dollars' worth of chips, and when the settlements were made Marsh found he had won a hundred and fifteen dollars. Only two others were larger winners than he.

"The same old story," chaffed Senator Paxton, who had lost three hundred dollars. "The new man always wins. But," he said, turning to Marsh, "beware, my son, for we'll hook you yet."

Most of the party had carriages and automobiles waiting outside, but Marsh announced he would walk to his hotel.

"I'll walk down with you," said one of the New Yorkers, George F. Quicksall by name, who was connected with one of the big banking combinations of New York.

Quicksall talked of finance as they walked along and Marsh was greatly interested. He questioned Quicksall on some points in relation to the market.

"Do you ever do anything in the Street?" asked Quicksall.

"Not much. Occasionally I buy a few shares of stock. Is there anything interesting over there?"

Marsh had been bursting to ask this question of the New York men ever since he met them. He wanted money and he wanted it badly.

"Well," said Quicksall, "I know of a pool that is being organised to carry a few thousand shares of a certain stock for a ten-point rise. I might get you some of that."

"How much would it take?" asked Marsh eagerly.

"How much what?"

"How much money?"

"Oh," said Quicksall carelessly, "not much, as money goes. I don't know exactly yet where they will take the stuff over, but I'll put you down for a thousand shares and we can settle afterward when the books are made up."

"A thousand shares?" gasped Marsh.

"Yes, that'll be about a tenth of it. I am quite sure my associates will be glad to have you in with us."

"But," stammered Marsh, "but — I don't know as — That's a big order —"

Quicksall looked at Marsh curiously as they passed a street lamp. He saw Marsh was much excited, but palpably afraid.

"I am quite sure it will be all right, Mr. Marsh," said Quicksall. "However there's no hurry. Think it over and let me know. If you

don't want it it will be all right "; and he gave Marsh his card.

Marsh slept very little that night. He was trying to figure out a way to get money to cover his interest in case the speculation failed. In his heart he knew it wouldn't fail, but he kept that information away from his head.

XIII

EASY MONEY

“NICE party we had last night,” said Senator Paxton to Marsh next day when they met at the Capitol. “Pretty lucky to get away with that money, too, with those wolves trying to eat you up.”

“I noticed they played them pretty close to their bosoms,” Marsh replied.

“Greatest tightwads in the world,” said Paxton, “with the exception of the few liberal ones. Most of them would rather lose their right legs than overplay a hand or lose a pot.”

“By the way, senator,” asked Marsh, trying to appear as if the question was merely for purpose of gratifying his curiosity, “who’s Mr. Quicksall?”

“Quicksall? Oh, Quicksall is one of the junior partners in the big house of Stunz & Sturgess. He’s a likely young fellow who looks out a good deal for legislative matters they are interested in and is a comer. Why?”

“Oh, nothing! I walked down with him last night and he seems to be a nice fellow.”

“Wise, too,” commented the senator.

"Knows his way about. He made a lot of money for me not long ago."

"How?" asked Marsh eagerly.

"Put me in on an underwriting scheme that split \$200,000, and I got a tenth of it."

"How much did you have to put up?"

"How much did I have to put up?" repeated Paxton in surprise. "Why, I didn't put up anything. I merely took a tenth of the underwriting and stood to lose that tenth if anything broke or went wrong; but nothing did and I got my share of the profit on the deal. There's one good thing about Quicksall—he doesn't want it all himself. He's willing to split now and then and he's mighty popular round here."

Marsh was reassured. He turned the conversation to another channel, but when he walked down Pennsylvania Avenue from the House, after adjournment, he dropped into Quicksall's hotel and told him he would take a chance in the pool.

"All right," said Quicksall. "I don't think you can lose. I'll write you in a few days and tell you what your share is."

Quicksall left for New York on the midnight train. Five days later Marsh received a letter in an envelope bearing the Stunz & Sturgess imprint. He opened it nervously. There was a cheque for \$6500 in it and this letter:

"*Dear Mr. Marsh:* I found when I returned to New York that matter we spoke about was much nearer action than I had supposed. I

“put you in for a thousand shares, assumed the
“responsibility on what you had told me, and to-
“day we closed out at a seven-point rise. Your
“share of the expense is \$500, and I beg to hand
“you herewith our cheque for \$6500. Trusting
“this will be satisfactory to you, I am,

“Yours very truly,

“GEORGE F. QUICKSALL.”

“Trusting this will be satisfactory to you!” repeated Marsh to himself in a dazed sort of a way. “I wonder if there ever was anything quite so satisfactory to anybody on this earth before?”

Marsh couldn't keep his eyes off the cheque. Those figures, \$6500, seemed to hypnotise him. Three times he put it in his pocketbook, and each time he took it out, looked at it again, turned it over, held it up to the light, patted it, caressed it. It was a lifesaver for him. He was short of funds. He needed money, and here six thousand five hundred dollars dropped into his lap. He recalled the Biblical story of manna dropping from Heaven. He was a lucky man.

But was he? That question constantly obtruded; and another: Why had Quicksall, a man whom he had met but twice, done this thing for him? He recalled Senator Paxton's description of him: “One of the junior partners in the big house of Stunz & Sturgess. He's a likely young fellow, who looks out a good deal for legislative matters they are interested in and is a comer.”

Marsh pondered that: “Looks out for legis-

lative matters they are interested in." That no doubt was the explanation. Quicksall wanted to put Marsh under obligations to him. And if he had but known it he had put Marsh under tremendous obligations to him, for Marsh needed cash, needed it desperately. Still there was the other side of it. Could Marsh afford to take the money? It was certain that sooner or later Quicksall would ask for his pound of flesh. He would demand a return. These men, thought Marsh, are not philanthropists. They are not handing out money in six-thousand-dollar chunks to members of Congress who are temporarily embarrassed for the mere pleasure of relieving the necessities of those statesmen. There was no charity about it. It wasn't a gift. It was a deliberate opening of negotiations with Marsh, a retainer for services to be rendered in the future, services that, in all probability, would not only be difficult to perform but dangerous politically. Marsh was no child, no fool. He was under no delusions as to the nature of this gift, for it was a gift with a string attached, and Marsh saw the string. He didn't argue that side of it much with himself. His question was whether in the circumstances he could afford to take the money. How much would it embarrass him in the future? Would it be safe?

The honesty or dishonesty of the transaction didn't figure conspicuously in Marsh's deliberations. With him it was mainly a question of expediency. He set his need for the money on

the one side, and itemised all the places where parts of it could be applied with advantage to himself and his affairs. On the other side he placed the danger of being found out, the strength of the hold on him the transaction would give Quicksall, the effect it might have on him politically if word that he was taking money from Wall Street got back to his district, where Wall Street was a synonym for Gehenna. He balanced these items, weighed one against the other, felt inclined to send the cheque back, but was restrained when he saw that magic "\$6500" and thought what he could do with the cash.

Another thing that puzzled him was why they had chosen him for their schemes. His only appearance, except in a set speech or two on a national policy and his committee work, had been in opposition to the organisation when he fought the landgrab bill. He had flattered himself he had shown a real independence of thought and action in that matter. He had hoped to impress on the minds of the leaders of the organisation that he was a man to be reckoned with, a man who would not blindly follow where they led, but who would carve out a way for himself if the path of the regulars was not to his liking. He even had visions of becoming a great opposition leader, of voicing the protest of the people against this congressional oligarchy, and here he was, within a month of his first real exhibition of the thought that was in him, in receipt of a cheque for \$6500

from one of the most interested of the interests, and reluctant to send back the cheque and declare his independence, his refusal to be bribed.

Twice Marsh began a letter to Quicksall, returning the money, not angrily but pleasantly informing Quicksall he was mistaken in his man and that he never took money for which he had not made an adequate return. Twice the alluring figures on the cheque held him back, and he tore up the letters and returned the cheque to his pocket-book. He was thoroughly uncomfortable, and he resolved to talk with Senator Paxton in order to get the viewpoint of a man who undoubtedly had taken just such money many times and made no secret of it.

He went over to the Senate side of the Capitol and found Paxton, who was in his committee room dictating letters.

"Sit down, Marsh, and have a cigar," said Paxton. "I'll be through here in a minute or two." Paxton turned to his stenographer and said: "Take this: 'George F. Quicksall, care Stunz & Sturgess. My dear Quicksall —'"

Paxton was dictating in an ordinary conversational tone and was paying no attention to Marsh's presence in the room. Marsh listened. He didn't mean to, but he couldn't help it. He wondered what the senator had to say to Quicksall, and although he tried to read a newspaper he felt himself straining his ears to hear what the letter contained.

“ ‘ My dear Quicksall, ’ ” continued the senator. “ Got that? ‘ I am in receipt of your letter of yesterday with inclosure. I am glad to note that our venture turned out so satisfactorily. I hear you were generous with this information and that several of our mutual friends were included in the deal. While we all understand perfectly that this action on your part was predicated on no motive other than that of good-fellowship, I can assure you that I for one am not indifferent to this further evidence of your long-enjoyed friendship, and shall hope to see you soon in person in order that I may have an opportunity to express my thanks by word of mouth. With sincere regards, I am, yours faithfully. ’ ”

“ I’ll sign that myself, ” said the senator to his stenographer. “ For Heaven’s sake see that it gets in my personal letters. Last week you sent out a letter with a rubber-stamp signature that was going to a very touchy person, and I had the dickens of a time squaring myself. ”

“ It’s strange, ” Paxton continued, turning to Marsh, “ how a little thing like that will raise trouble. Of course you know how many letters come into a place like this, and you yourself undoubtedly have a series of form replies that can be typewritten by your stenographer and sent back with a rubber-stamp signature or signed by the stenographer. Well, if by any accident a rubber-

stamped letter gets to a man who thinks he is entitled to a real, pen-and-ink signature from me, he is much more insulted than he would be if I had written him a letter in my own copperplate handwriting and refused his request.

“The ancient but crafty philosopher who said: ‘All is vanity,’ had an adequate understanding of the situation. It is my experience, Marsh, that the human machine, as it is typed in this country, has two predominating attributes. One is vanity and the other is incompetency. Most of the human rabbits with whom men in our position have to deal are obsessed of two ideas. The first is that they are much more important than they really are and capable of doing a great many things they cannot by any possibility do, and the second is that somebody, usually me, is under obligations to get them the chance to do these great things. The simple expedient of going out and getting the chance for themselves never occurs to them.

“The greatest curse that ever fell on this world was the curse of using influence to get position and to hold it. It is as old as history, and it has reached its highest development in these United States of America. Men — and women too — who might do something of their own initiative waste years in trying to get somebody to use his influence to help them. The thought that some merit of their own might assist never gets to them. They must have influence. So we have built a government wherein the man who can bring the greatest pull to bear is the man who gets the of-

fice, not the man who deserves it. And it is an organised affair. A political organisation is nothing but a systematised, crystallised application of influence. The scrubwoman goes to the organisation for influence to help her get her job, or to some member of the organisation who can use his influence on some other member, and so on up until the whole machine is interested; and so does a man who wants to be an ambassador. And the blight of it all is that most of those who can get influence lack in the ability they should have to be worthy of the places they get.

“A man gets a place through some pull or other. His interest isn't in doing his work so that he may hold his job, but in holding his influence so he may hold his job. We've tried to remedy it with civil-service reform, and we haven't succeeded, for there is no way to make over or change human nature by statute, however much various brands of reformers may think there is. And the incompetency of these half-educated, half-baked, wholly irresponsible people appals one. Their only idea is to do as little work as they can for their money, and their usual attitude is that of sullen contempt for their bosses for making it possible for them to get their pay by putting them to work. It's just like a man to whom you lend money. He becomes your enemy because you have done something for him.

“But, pshaw, it's as old as the race, and it will be there when the end comes. Only beware of the pest with a grievance. He is the most terri-

ble outcome of the whole scheme of things. There is where the vanity of it comes in. He thinks his petty trouble is the most important thing in the world, and maybe it is to him; but once he gets a chance to exhibit his sores and find a little sympathy, the craving to have those sores on perpetual exhibition grows on him until he is the most frightful bore I know about. I've got a couple of them on my hands now. Don't be surprised if you read in the papers some morning that Senator Paxton ran amuck last night and killed a few persons who had been in consultation with him every day for weeks.

"However, how are you? I've just been writing a letter to Quicksall. Did he let you in on that pool? Good thing that. Neat little cheque came in in the mail this morning. Nice boy, Quicksall, and he never asks for a thing."

"Yes," said Marsh, "he put me in, and I don't know what to do about it."

"Don't know what to do about what? "

"Why, I had a conversation with him one night, and he told me of a pool that was forming to buy ten thousand shares of a stock — he didn't tell me what stock — and said I could have a tenth of it. I told him I didn't think I could swing that much, and he said he'd carry it for me for a time until I made up my mind. Then if I didn't take it no harm would be done. This morning I got a letter from him and a cheque for \$6500 as my share of a pool I didn't know I was

in on even, to say nothing of having put up no money."

Paxton laughed. "So that's it, is it?" he asked. "You feel that this money is more or less of a gift?"

"Exactly."

"Well, perhaps it is, if you look at it in that light, but you want to remember that a gift that entails obligation is a gift that costs the giver something. This deal didn't cost Quicksall anything, except the mere lending of his name to the pool. He had a ten-thousand-share part of it. If he chose to split that ten-thousand-share part and give you a tenth of it, say, and then turn over the profits, why should you kick? He didn't ask you to do anything, did he?"

"No."

"You wouldn't do anything you shouldn't do if he did, would you?"

"No."

"You don't hold yourself so cheaply that a little transaction like this would influence you in any way in legislative matters, do you?"

"I do not," exclaimed Marsh emphatically.

"Well then, where's the harm? A man you meet apparently takes a liking to you. It comes his way to do you a little favour, and he does it; and you sit round, mooching and grouching, and thinking he is trying to buy you, while he probably had no idea in his head other than to be a good fellow."

"But," said Marsh, "you told me yourself that he looks out for legislative matters for his firm."

"Certainly he does, and it's up to him to be on good terms with the men who legislate. If he can do a turn for any of them that's business, just as it is business when a New York merchant invites a buyer from Morganville out, feeds him well and takes him to a show. It's all one — business. He wants you to know who he is and to be his friend when anything comes along he is interested in. He isn't trying to get you to do anything immoral or dishonest or against your principles, but he wants you to be his friend, and thinks, perhaps, he may have a shade the better of it when it comes to a showdown. If he doesn't get that shade he makes no protest. He'll never suggest even that you shall do anything out of the way for him. He's merely taking a sporting chance on making you his friend, and, I take it, you are sport enough to play the game, especially when it is understood on both sides that there is no obligation."

"But there will be an obligation," protested Marsh.

"Nonsense! Let me tell you, Marsh, if George Quicksall or any other man of his stamp had even the remotest idea they could buy you for sixty-five hundred dollars they wouldn't buy you if they could get you for ten cents. It's proof they think they can't buy you when they let you in on a perfectly legitimate deal like this."

"That side of it hadn't occurred to me," said

Marsh, who could see the figures on the cheque — “\$6500.”

“Well, it’s so. And I take it the money will come in handy?”

“It certainly will.”

“Then stick the cheque in the bank and think no more about it. I’m going down now to deposit mine. Want to ride with me?”

“No,” said Marsh, “I’ve got a committee meeting.”

Notwithstanding the arguments of Senator Paxton, Marsh was uneasy in his mind. He felt qualms of conscience. He felt — knew — Quicksall didn’t let him in because he had taken a violent fancy to him after meeting him twice. He couldn’t understand why he had been invited to those dinners. It puzzled him; but that afternoon he had a chance to get into a hot debate, and acquitted himself so well that many of his colleagues came over and congratulated him, and he had forgotten all about the cheque when he went to his hotel elated over his success.

“Jim,” said Mrs. Marsh after dinner, “Dorothy came in to see me this afternoon.”

“How is she?”

“Oh, very well, and she is full of the amateur theatricals the girls of the school are going to give next month. She has a leading part.”

“Are they teaching her to be an actress along with other useful accomplishments?” inquired Marsh.

“Of course not, but it is a great thing for a girl

in her first year to have this distinction. She is crazy about it. She came in to talk to me about her costume."

"Her costume?" Marsh sat up straight. He knew what was coming.

"Certainly. You didn't think she could appear in her street dress, did you?"

"No," answered Marsh; "my experience is that neither of you can appear twice in any dress you may happen to have."

"Don't be nasty, Jim," said Mrs. Marsh calmly. "The point is that Dorothy, who is to take the part of a lady of the Eighteenth Century, is obliged to buy a very expensive costume."

"How much will it cost?"

"Oh, I don't know yet, for there are special shoes and wigs and all that to go with it. I'm afraid it will be quite expensive, though, for Dorothy has one of the leading parts, and her costume will have to be rather elaborate."

"Huh!" commented Marsh.

"And while we're on the subject of clothes, dear," she added sweetly, "I find I've simply got to have three new gowns myself."

"Three new gowns!" Marsh jumped from his chair. "Good Lord, Molly, you must think I'm a millionaire. Well, I'm not, and it's costing me all I can get and more to keep up this social foolishness of yours. Where's it going to stop?"

Mrs. Marsh didn't reply. Instead, she wept a little. Marsh walked about the room, fidgeted with some books on the table, lighted a cigar,

looked out the window, took a glass of water, fidgeted with some more books, tried to read a newspaper. Finally he went over to her chair.

"All right, Molly," he said. "I guess I can make it."

He knew he could, for before his eyes was dancing that pink slip of paper with "\$6500" written on it and stamped across it in perforated letters: "Not over six thousand five hundred," and the signature of Stunz & Sturgess at the bottom. It would have been good if it had been for six million five hundred thousand.

Next day he put the cheque in the bank. His banker friend saw him at the window, greeted him with one of those restricted smiles of his and with elaborate politeness. As soon as Marsh left the bank the banker went into the cage of the receiving teller and looked at the cheque. He smiled again when he saw it, smiled another of those smiles that only included his lips; and there was no smile in his eyes.

XIV

"BE BOSS YOURSELF"

THE session ended. Marsh made several speeches that added to his reputation in his district, at least, for he sent them out under his frank as "part of the Congressional Record" to most of his constituents. He developed a facility in debate, and several times was put up by the majority leader to help in the fight for a bill. He was hailed as a comer and the leaders watched him narrowly.

Mrs. Marsh was getting invitations to more exclusive functions. She had her picture in the papers again, and she never failed to supply the society editors with the minutest chronicle of her social activities. Marsh went to three dinners given by men of prominence, and he and Mrs. Marsh dined with the Paxtons in a large company and at several other good houses. Marsh was proud of his wife, who was a most attractive woman and very popular because of her vivacity and skill at small talk. Her gowns were the envy of many of the women. She wore them well and had excellent taste. The sixty-five hundred dollars helped out amazingly, and there was a good

bit of it left when the family returned to Morganville for the summer. Marsh had met Quicksall several times, but, after the first interchange of thanks and protestations that it was nothing, the subject of the cheque did not come up between them nor did Quicksall offer to do anything more for him.

The Congressional Convention was called early that year and Marsh was renominated by acclamation. His speech of acceptance roused much enthusiasm. McManus sat on the platform when he made it. The Democrats put up a weak man and Marsh thought he had a walk-away for election.

One morning, in the first week in September, McManus sent for Marsh.

“ Jim,” said the boss, “ the county nominating convention comes next week.”

“ I know it.”

“ Well, we’ve got to pick out a man for district-attorney. That’s going to be our most important office, because this Civic Betterment League is mixing in so hard some of the boys are bound to get into trouble.”

“ Who’ve you got in mind? ” asked Marsh indifferently.

McManus squared round, looked Marsh straight in the eye and said: “ Billy Hoover.”

“ What? ” shouted Marsh, jumping to his feet. “ Not that crook? ”

“ Yes,” replied McManus quietly. “ I am going to nominate Billy Hoover.”

"But, Bob," protested Marsh, "you can't do that! Billy Hoover is known all over this district as a blackmailer, a thief, a shyster, briber, a jury-fixer. Why, I've even heard he's a white slaver."

"Nevertheless," answered McManus, "I'm going to nominate Billy Hoover for district-attorney and you've got to stand for it."

"By God, I won't stand for it!" shouted Marsh. "I won't stand for it for a single damned minute! You might as well know that here and now! You can't tie me up with any such crook as Hoover! It's preposterous! You must be crazy, Bob, to think of imperilling the whole lot of us by sticking that scoundrel on the ticket. It's indecent. You can't do it."

"I can do it," said McManus, "and what's more I'm going to do it. And you might just as well cut out the heroics and take your medicine. Billy Hoover is going on the ticket and you're going to support him."

"I won't!" yelled Marsh, wild with rage. "You can't handicap me that way with this thief, merely because some of your ballot-stealing, bribing, repeating saloonkeepers and divekeepers and handy men may get what is coming to them. You can't do it, McManus. I won't stand for it, I tell you."

McManus lighted a fresh cigar with elaborate care. "Jim," he said, "I'd like to know, just to gratify my own curiosity, what you can do about it?"

“ I’ll go out and fight him. I’ll go out and fight you. I’ll make a campaign against him. I’ll brand him as a thief on every stump in the county. I’ll — I’ll — ”

“ Hold on, Jim. Don’t make any rash threats. Sit down for a minute and think what will happen to you if you get gay in this way.”

Marsh sank into a chair. He was pale. Cold sweat stood out on his forehead. His hands were clammy. His heart beat wildly. He knew what would happen to him. He would be beaten, and McManus would beat him.

“ For God’s sake, McManus,” he pleaded, “ don’t do this. It’s an outrage and you know it. It will offend every decent man in the county and every decent woman. The people will rise up against it. Have some sense. Think it over. You and I have been good friends and you have done a lot for me, and I’m willing to go the limit for you; but this is beyond the limit. It’s so far beyond I couldn’t hold up my head in this community if you put it over and force me to support Hoover. Don’t do it, Mac.”

“ Jim,” said McManus, “ there are reasons why I’ve got to do it. I’ve got to protect the boys because I thereby protect myself. We can get away with it. There will be a howl at first, but my organisation is strong enough to put it over. If we haven’t the votes we can get them. Come on now and play the game.”

“ Play the game? ” exclaimed Marsh. “ You know I’m willing enough to play the game, but not

this kind of a game. What sort of a game is it, Bob, when you deliberately insult the whole community by putting up a crook and a scoundrel for district-attorney, your prosecuting officer, on a ticket as a candidate of a party to which more than half of our people belong? ”

“ It’s the game of politics,” answered McManus slowly. “ It’s the rotten game of politics, but it’s the game that I am playing and that you are playing, and we’ve got to play it together or we’ll both lose out.”

Marsh sat and stared at the floor. After five minutes, during which neither man spoke, McManus said: “ Think it over, Jim, and come and see me in a day or two. I’m going to do it. Don’t forget that.”

Marsh walked unsteadily up the street. He saw his whole future imperilled. He knew there would be a revolt against the candidacy of Hoover, especially as the Civic Betterment League was so active in the politics of Morganville. He knew there would be an independent candidate. He knew he would be called upon to state his position as to Hoover. He knew he would be beaten if he stood by McManus. He wondered what had happened to McManus. Was he sane? Had he suddenly been bereft of his political judgment? The thing was unexplainable to him. His mind refused to grasp it. He would go back to McManus and argue with him, plead with him not to do this thing. It was suicide. It was criminal. And most of all it would defeat him.

Marsh took a long walk out in the country, turning the thing over in his mind. He knew McManus was set in his ways, was an absolute boss, and that he could nominate Hoover or any other man, so complete was his control of the nominating machinery. He knew also that McManus could and would defeat him. To be sure he had the regular nomination, but there was still time for McManus to put up an independent candidate against him, which he could do easily, or else he could throw the support of his organisation to the Democrat named against Marsh. The turn of six hundred votes would elect his opponent. McManus controlled more than six hundred votes in Morganville alone, to say nothing of the rest of the district.

When he got back to his office, still undecided as to his course, he found a telegram there from Paxton, who was at his home in the city fifty miles away. "Come over and see me. Important," it read. Marsh took the evening train and reached the senator's house at ten o'clock.

"Hello, Jim," said the senator, as Marsh came into the library where Paxton was seated. "Glad to see you. I note you were nominated again without any trouble."

"Yes and no," answered Marsh. "There wasn't any trouble about the nomination, but there's a hell of a lot of it now."

Paxton handed him a cigar. "That's what I want to talk with you about," he said.

There was a pause. Then the senator began:

"I understand Bob McManus is going to nominate Billy Hoover for district-attorney."

"That's what he says, but I can't think he means it."

"Oh, he means it all right. He's in a hole with the things that Civic Betterment League has dug up. You know, Marsh, McManus hasn't been exactly what you might call an exponent of purity in elections over there in your county or in the district either."

"I suppose not."

"You know not. Well, he's got a lot of the judges on his staff, but he's got to have the district-attorney too, for sure as a gun there will be some attempts to indict him and some of his followers. He's got to have the right representation before the grand jury. So he's picked Hoover, and Hoover will do anything he tells him to do."

"And in the meantime," said Marsh bitterly, "I get the worst of it and so do all the rest of the men on the ticket, just because McManus is trying to save his own skin."

"Well, Jim," and the senator was very gentle about it, "McManus is human and politics is the most selfish game on this earth. You know that. We can't blame him for trying to look out for himself."

"And I've got to stand for it merely because McManus happens to be the boss of the county," Marsh exclaimed passionately.

Paxton puffed reflectively at his cigar. After

a minute or two he turned to Marsh and put his hand on Marsh's shoulder. “Not necessarily, Jim,” he said quietly; “not necessarily.”

“What do you mean?” asked Marsh, jumping to his feet excitedly. “Do you mean I can beat him in the convention?”

“No, I don't mean that. That wouldn't amount to anything. It would merely save him from error. Sit down.”

“What do you mean then?” Marsh was eager; his eyes blazed.

“I mean,” said Senator Paxton slowly, “that you can jump in and take the organisation away from McManus and be the boss yourself.”

Marsh started from his chair again. He walked nervously to the end of the room, stood for a minute looking out of a window, then turned and asked: “Could I? Do you think I could?”

“Why not? The stage seems to be set for you. All it needs is for you to come on and play the part.”

“But,” said Marsh hesitatingly, “that would be damned ingratitude on my part.”

“Gratitude, my dear Jim,” remarked the senator, smiling a little, “is one of the most valuable of the human attributes — valuable because, like radium, it is so rare, and far beyond the value of radium in politics, where it is so scarce as to be practically unknown. Sit down. There's nothing to get excited about. Let me outline the situation to you: McManus, to save his own skin, has decided to name a crook for district-attorney

to complete his protective chain, which begins with his control of the courts. He is personally indifferent whether you or any one else is ruined in the process. That shows, I should say, a decided lack of gratitude on his part for what you have done for him — and you have done things, as I know. Now, then, Jim, Bob McManus has ceased to be useful to us. He has overplayed his hand. Sooner or later he is bound to be the centre of a big political scandal, and we are not looking for any political scandals at this particular time. Almost providentially he has given us the instruments for his own destruction. In his wild desire to keep himself out of jail he has handed us the very instrument with which we can put him in jail, take his organisation away from him, and become exemplars of purity and reform in politics, thus perpetuating ourselves in a manner quite necessary to our ends and aims."

"But," asked Marsh, who was beginning to feel himself the successor of McManus, "won't his gang stick by him?"

"There, my son, is where you dispute the truth of the immortal axiom I just enunciated. His gang will not stick by him. No gang, except in the cases of a few sentimental individuals, ever stuck by a deposed boss. You do not realise the utter selfishness of this game. Why should a gang stick by McManus? He can't do anything for them after he has lost out. As for gratitude for what he has done for them, that is not to be considered. There ain't no such ani-

mile. They'll quit him the moment he shows signs of losing; don't worry about that.”

“Why do you put this up to me?”

“There you go again, Jim, howling for motives. But if it will satisfy that curiosity of yours and if the reason hasn't occurred to you, or if this is merely an acute attack of mock modesty, of elaborate self-depreciation, I'll tell you why I put it up to you. The reason I asked you to come over here is because I have been watching you in Congress and I need you in my business. You are a big, strong, clever man. You have the makings of a person I need in this state, a person with the gift of talk, with a good mind and a good sense of proportion to stand out and direct things, or assume to. Of course, you understand, I shall direct your directing, but that will come later. I want to form the political firm of Paxton and Marsh, and I can do a lot of things for you, and I will, if you will be on the square. Also I can do a few necessary things for myself. You see, Jim,” he ended whimsically, “as I pointed out a few minutes ago, the element of selfishness is not entirely separated from the practice of politics as a profession.”

They talked a long time. Paxton had his plans made. Marsh assented to them. He was to return to Morganville, tell McManus he would oppose the nomination of Hoover and break definitely with the boss. Both knew McManus was stubborn enough and confident enough of his power, as he had reason to be, to compel the nom-

ination of Hoover, and Marsh was to make his protest public the moment the nomination was made, organise a revolt, lead it against McManus, name a good, clean, independent candidate and fight to the finish. They were both sure public sentiment would be with them and that McManus would be beaten. Then Marsh could assume the leadership, reorganise the machine and take his position as the boss. Paxton promised Marsh all the aid he needed from national party sources to make his own campaign, for McManus would contribute nothing. Everything was arranged.

“Remember, Jim,” said the senator as they parted, “all I ask of you is that you play the game.”

XV

THE SPLIT WITH MC MANUS

MARSH went to see McManus the second day after he had his conference with Senator Paxton. "Bob," he said, "how about that Hoover business?"

"That's all settled. It's water over the dam," McManus replied.

"You're going to nominate him?"

"Sure!"

"Well, Bob, I won't stand for it."

"You won't stand for it?" sneered McManus. "Who in hell cares whether you stand for it or not? What difference does that make to me? You'll stand for it all right, or you'll get the worst trimming any man ever got who ran for Congress out this way."

"That may be," said Marsh, keeping his temper, "but I tell you now once for all that I'm going to fight you on it."

"Fight and be damned!" screamed McManus. "I'll break every bone in your body. I'll throw you so far in the political discard you won't know who's been elected president for four years after it's happened. I'll put you on the dump with a

lot of other smart Alecks who decided to fight Bob McManus. Get the hell out of here and make your fight, and see where you come out! Gwan!"

Marsh walked out. He was angry, but he had sense enough to do nothing until McManus had shown his hand. He didn't want to spoil things by announcing his opposition to something that was yet undone. So he sat steady and waited for the convention.

He had been elected a delegate to the convention at his ward caucus. He had his credentials. He was to have been permanent chairman, and he had planned to make a speech about party unity, harmony, the grand old organisation and such necessary flubdub, and to see to it that the slate was rushed through.

The convention was held in the opera house. There were one hundred and ten delegates. A contest had been framed against Marsh's delegation by the orders of McManus, but Marsh made such a fight in the credentials committee and had so much right on his side that the members of that committee, which was an unusual one, inasmuch as there never was any protest over delegations in county conventions, forgot their orders and seated Marsh and his colleagues and the contesting delegates also, with half a vote apiece. McManus was frantic with rage, for this allowed Marsh a seat in the convention. However, neither one had said anything about the break, and McManus

secretly felt that Marsh would back water at the last moment.

Paxton encouraged Marsh with a wire telling him to go ahead, and Marsh awaited developments. The permanent organisation was perfected with that smoothness of detail and accuracy of movement that characterised all of the conventions handled by McManus, who sat glowering across the aisle at Marsh at the head of his own ward delegation. The delegates from the towns knew nothing of what was imminent, and the Morganville delegates barely sensed something wrong, but did not know what it was. A county judge was named and nominated by acclamation.

"Nominations for district-attorney are in order," piped the chairman, a creature of McManus.'

Instantly, a big, red-faced lawyer, who was the personal attorney of McManus, rushed to the platform. The chairman rapped for order. The red-faced man in a ten-minutes speech dwelt upon the virtues of the person he had in mind, told of his eminent qualifications for the great office of district-attorney, his tremendous legal abilities, his sterling honesty, his active citizenship, and wound up with the words "and for this highly important office, important to every citizen and taxpayer of this county, I have the honour to propose the name of the Honourable William B. Hoover, of Morganville."

Marsh had moved up toward the stage. After the cheering had ceased — McManus had arranged a vociferous applause — he walked to the stairs.

As he was climbing the short flight of stairs the chairman shouted: "Are there any other nominations? The chair hears none. Nominations are closed. What is the pleasure of the convention?"

"Mr. Chairman," yelled another McManus follower, "I move that the Honourable William B. Hoover be declared the nominee of this convention for the office of district-attorney."

"Second that," roared a dozen delegates.

"Mr. Chairman!" shouted Marsh, who was then in the centre of the stage. "Mr. Chairman!"

The chairman ignored him. "It is moved and seconded," he recited glibly, "that the Honourable William B. Hoover be declared the nominee of this convention for the office of district-attorney of Greenfield County. All in favour say 'Aye.'"

There was a great volume of "Ayes."

"Opposed, 'No,'" said the chairman.

"No!" yelled Marsh.

"The ayes have it," declared the chairman, "and the Honourable William B. Hoover is the nominee. The next office to be filled is that of county treasurer. Nominations are in order."

"Mr. Chairman!" shouted Marsh again.

"For what purpose does the gentleman rise?" asked the chairman, regarding Marsh in a sur-

prised manner, as if he were just at that moment aware of his presence on the stage.

"I desire to protest against the nomination of this thief, this crook —"

"He's out of order!" screamed a delegate.

There came a great chorus of "Throw him out!" "Regular order!" and Marsh, vainly trying to make himself heard, subsided as he saw nothing could be done. The chairman knew his business. The ticket was quickly completed, according to the slate, and the convention adjourned, with Marsh standing on the stage, angry, but feeling rather foolish for all that.

McManus grinned sardonically. "Go to it!" he rasped, as Marsh walked out. "Go to it! You'll never get back to Washington. I'll fix you all right, and I'm the man who can do it!"

The reporters for the two little afternoon papers in Morganville came to Marsh's office, and he gave them an interview protesting against the nomination of Hoover. He declared Hoover to be unworthy of the support of any honest man, and demanded a public expression on the nomination and another candidate, "in order," as he said, "that the politics of our county shall no longer be prostituted to the base desires of this man McManus, who styles himself boss." The papers printed the interview as news, but as they were controlled by McManus editorially they indorsed Hoover.

There was great excitement. The question of the fitness of Hoover for the district-attorneyship

took precedence over all other topics in the county. There was a mass meeting in the opera house, arranged by the Civic Betterment League, at which Marsh was the principal speaker. He was in great form and made the best speech he had ever made. He went into details as to the unfitness of Hoover, scored McManus and his corrupt machine, and demanded that the citizens of Morganville and Greenfield County should cleanse themselves of this festering sore that fed on the body politic. There was much enthusiasm. An independent candidate was selected, a bright, clean young lawyer named Carver from one of the country towns, who had no possible connection with McManus, and the fight was bitter from the start.

McManus sat until late every night in the back room at his headquarters directing the campaign for Hoover. He perfected his organisation, looked carefully after the election machinery, which he controlled, brought in as many repeaters as he dared and lodged them in shacks by the river, and spent money lavishly. He forced several men of good repute, who were under obligations to him or about whom he had disconcerting if not criminal knowledge, to go on the stump for Hoover, but he kept that person discreetly in the background. He used both afternoon papers. The one morning paper in the town was anti-McManus, and Marsh secured his publicity through that. Marsh organised the campaign for Carver, the independent candidate, worked

night and day, made many speeches, and did not go near his law office for weeks.

The good citizens of the county had rallied to Marsh and he was praised on every hand for his patriotic stand for pure politics. The city papers sent down reporters, who wrote picturesque stories about the fight of Marsh against boss rule, and a week or so before the end of the campaign a couple of political correspondents for Chicago papers, whose editors had been attracted by the clamour, dropped in and sent back a column or two about the muss. They took Marsh's side, as is the way with virtuous political correspondents, they being always against boss rule, for opposition creates copy, while support of the organisation consists mostly in keeping things out of the papers or putting things in that are not necessarily in line with the facts.

The wisest political observers coincided in their views that it was a case of nip-and-tuck. Tremendous efforts were made in the last week to bring about a movement that should aid the independent candidate, but McManus held his forces well in hand and claimed to be confident. Election day came with each side frightened. Nobody knew what would happen, although Marsh felt there was a strong underneath movement toward his man. His own campaign had been practically neglected. He made a few speeches, but things looked well out in the district, where Senator Paxton was on guard and was holding the regulars in line, on the theory that this affair in Greenfield

County was merely a local muss and must not complicate the national situation or lose the party a representative in Congress. McManus had ordered his followers, not only in Greenfield County, but through the district, to vote for Marsh's Democratic opponent.

Word came from all parts of the county on election day that the voting was heavy, and the early returns that night showed the two candidates for district-attorney to be running evenly. The returns were delayed, owing to a new and complicated ballot law that had been in effect only a short time, and at midnight it was seen that a hundred or two votes either way would decide the contest. The two river wards of Morganville were slow in sending in their returns. Marsh suspected trickery there and hurried men down to the polling places. They found policemen on guard at the doors, but Marsh's watchers were all inside and attending to their duties. It was explained that the reason the count was so slow in these wards was because the election officials were mostly foreigners — it was the mill district — and lacked the requisite expertness to make a quick count.

This didn't satisfy Marsh. The count from these wards had been expert enough at former elections, and the same election officials had been put there by McManus, who held the election machinery and dictated to every man who had to do with the balloting except the Marsh watchers. Marsh waited impatiently at his headquarters.

Word trickled out of these polling places that the two men were running about even. As the returns stood then, without these wards Marsh's man had won by about eighty votes. The morning paper went to press at two o'clock claiming the election of Marsh's candidate by a hundred, and the unofficial returns from the slow wards seemed to justify this report, from all Marsh could hear. He waited, though impatient, suspecting fraud, but not knowing where it would come.

XVI

TREVELYAN'S TROUSERS

EVERYBODY had gone home, except McManus and a few of his men at their headquarters and Marsh and half a dozen supporters at Marsh's headquarters. Although the returns from the river wards were not yet officially known, it was conceded that Marsh's candidate had won by approximately a hundred votes. It seemed certain that the river wards could not change this, for apparently accurate reports had been furnished by Marsh's watchers as to the count there and by the police.

Ernest Williams, the political reporter for the *Gazette*, the morning paper, had been sent out for a final round-up of the two headquarters to see if he could get something late for an extra. As he hurried up Main Street, which was deserted, he saw a cab come pelting by, and he thought he recognised Johnnie Trevelyan, city clerk and a strong McManus man, in the cab. Williams ran after it, and dodged discreetly into a doorway when the cab stopped in front of the stairway that led up to the McManus headquarters. Trevelyan got out. Two men were with him. Williams recognised the two men as McManus followers who held

small political jobs, one at the courthouse and one in the city hall. They hurried up the stairway.

Williams waited in the doorway. Presently the three men came down and Trevelyan got into the carriage. The city hall was only two blocks away. Williams stood and watched the cab drive there, then saw Trevelyan get out and run into the doorway. The street was well lighted, and he recognised Trevelyan, not only because he had seen him get into the cab, but because McManus wore a light suit, he being an advanced dresser according to Morganville standards. The other men walked away.

Williams went upstairs. McManus was sitting at his desk. "Well, Bob," said Williams, with the easy familiarity of the political reporter in the small town who knows all the personages intimately, "we licked you, didn't we?"

"Don't be so sure about that," said McManus. "It's close, but I wouldn't make any bet if I were you until we get the official count."

"What's that?" asked Williams sharply.

"I say it's close and it will take the official count to tell."

"Can I use the phone?" asked Williams.

"Sure, go ahead."

Williams called up his city editor. "Say, Charley," he said, "Bob McManus claims it will take an official count to tell who's won for district-attorney."

"Not on what we get from the city hall," snapped back the city editor. "The returns are

in from the river wards and they give it to Hoover by a hundred and sixty-four."

Williams whistled. "Yes, that's what I said," he repeated loudly. "Mr. McManus says it will take an official count. I'll be down and write something about it in a few minutes. And, oh, Charley, is Dan Leary over at the hall yet?"

"He was a few minutes ago. He phoned these returns in. Hustle if you're going to write anything, for we've got to make over and put this thing in doubt in the extra on the face of these late returns."

"Bye-bye, Bob," said Williams, lighting a cigarette with much nonchalance. "It's been a tough fight, but there's no hard feelings?"

"Not a bit in the world," McManus answered. "Good-night, Ernie."

Williams walked slowly out of the door and then took two jumps down the stairs. He rushed over to the city hall. Dan Leary was just leaving.

"Dan," panted Williams, "how did those returns come in from the river wards?"

"Johnny Trevelyan brought them in. Said he drove down and got them. Tired of waiting. He's filed them with the rest of the bunch, and Carrigan put them in the safe for the canvassing board in the morning."

"Did you see them?"

"Sure; I copied my figures from them."

"How did they look?"

"Like any other returns, you mutt. What's biting you?"

"Dan," said Williams excitedly, "you beat it over to the office and tell Charley to hold that extra until he hears from me. Beat it now!"

Leary started away on a gallop. Williams ran up the street and burst into Marsh's headquarters. Marsh was discussing the victory with three or four men who had been most active in the campaign.

"Mr. Marsh!" exclaimed Williams, "McManus has flimmed you."

"Flimmed me?" said Marsh. "How?"

"I don't know how, but the official returns from the river wards give the election to Hoover by a hundred and sixty-four."

"What's that?" shouted Marsh. "Say that again."

"I tell you the official returns, just in, give the election to Hoover by a hundred and sixty-four, and McManus claims that the official count will show that Hoover is elected."

Williams then told his story, how he had seen the cab drive up, how Trevelyan got out with two McManus heelers, how they went up to McManus' room, stayed a short time, and how Trevelyan went to the city hall, bringing in the returns himself and filing them.

"Jake," said Marsh to a man who had been watcher in one of the slow polling places, "are you sure your ward gave Carver forty-seven?"

"Sure's I'm alive. I saw it on the return sheet myself, put down in black and white."

"Where's Riordan?" shouted Marsh. "He was in the other ward."

"He's over at the Dutchman's getting a sandwich," Jake answered.

Marsh grabbed the telephone and called the Dutchman's, which was a saloon with a lunch-counter attachment. Riordan was summoned to the telephone.

"Riordan, come over here quick," shouted Marsh.

Three minutes later Riordan puffed into the room, his half-eaten cheese sandwich in his hand.

"Dan," questioned Marsh, "what did Carver get in your ward?"

"Sixty-two majority."

"Are you sure?"

"I saw it myself on the return sheet just before Johnnie Trevelyan came round to collect it and save the boys the bother of a trip uptown."

"Now, then, Williams," commanded Marsh, "tell me that story of yours again."

Williams related the incidents of the visit of Trevelyan to McManus and the rest of it.

"Simple enough," said Marsh quietly, as Williams finished his recital. "They shifted the sheets on us up there in McManus' office. Had duplicates all prepared, forged a signature or two probably, but put in new sheets with changed results on them so Hoover would win, and filed the bogus sheets. Plain as the nose on your face. Ernie," he said, "call up the *Gazette* and tell them to hold any extra they are getting out until

I can get down there. Come on, boys, this fight isn't over yet."

Marsh went to the *Gazette* office and wrote a statement, which was printed in big black type on the first page of the extra, claiming gross frauds on the part of McManus, charging specifically that the returns had been altered in the office of McManus, and calling on all good citizens of Morganville and Greenfield County to join with him to resist this outrage and put the perpetrators of it in the penitentiary. He used the telephone for an hour, summoned a number of his coworkers out for consultation with him at his office, drank a cup of coffee, bought himself some clean linen in a haberdasher's store, was shaved; and at nine o'clock waited on Justice Limbert of the Supreme Court of the state, who was holding court there. He told his story to the judge and applied for a temporary injunction restraining the canvassing board from canvassing the returns, alleging gross fraud, pending other proceedings.

Morganville was wildly excited over the news in the *Gazette* extra. There was a meeting of indignant protest at noon. Judge Limbert had granted the temporary injunction for which Marsh applied and set the hearing for Friday morning. The afternoon papers, both McManus organs, claimed Hoover's election carried statements from McManus denying absolutely the story in the *Gazette*, and calling Marsh a squealer, a traitor, an ingrate and reading him out of public life.

That night there was another mass meeting.

The people were angry. McManus and his followers stolidly held there was no fraud, and Johnnie Trevelyan asserted he did not bring up the returns at all, that they came in by regular messengers, and that he went over to the city hall at three o'clock in the morning to change his trousers.

XVII

THE STUPIDITY OF STROWLSKI

THE law provided that the ballots should be destroyed after they had been counted, the tally sheets filled out, the returns certified regularly by the proper polling-place officials. Therefore the question at issue was whether the returns filed in the office of the city clerk were the correct returns or fraudulent returns, and all there was to prove that was the testimony of those who had been present during the process of counting.

The morning paper contended vigorously that the returns had been fixed in the office of McManus, that the real sheets containing the real results in the polling for district-attorney had been taken out and other sheets prepared beforehand substituted, the complete return, under the law of the time, consisting of a number of return sheets, one for each office voted for, and all fastened together at the top by staples or pins. The McManus followers, in the two afternoon papers, scoffed at this idea as fantastic and the invention of beaten and squealing soreheads. They said the returns were regular, legal and accurate, and that Hoover had won by one hundred and sixty-

four. Marsh issued broadsides each morning, and the *Gazette* printed extras during the day to counteract the publications in the afternoon papers. Marsh worked unceasingly until Friday morning preparing his affidavits. His watchers were certain the returns in the river wards, as completed in the polling places, showed a majority for Carver, Marsh's candidate, in each ward, forty-seven in the fifth and sixty-two in the sixth. McManus had his election officials in constant consultation with him. He had engaged several of the best lawyers in Morganville. Marsh was to handle the case for his faction.

Morganville boiled. Meetings of protest were held each day. The street corners were occupied by arguing, gesticulating men, some upholding Marsh's fraud contentions and some standing by McManus. There were frequent fights. The few policemen in Morganville knew everybody, of course, and made no arrests when the McManus men were getting the better of these encounters, but as they owed their positions to McManus they promptly arrested every Marsh man who had a McManus man down and yelling for mercy, and the police judge, also a McManus appointee, fined the Marsh disturbers of the peace ten dollars for the first offence and threatened jail for the second.

It was noticed that a good many men who had been counted for McManus took no part in the controversy. They had supported Hoover under protest, under duress, indeed, for even the most ardent of the McManus partisans admitted

privately they thought the boss had gone too far when he nominated Hoover. McManus had put on every screw he could. He forced various so-called leading citizens to uphold his contention, because of financial or other obligations to him, and he was in constant conference with his election officials.

It is doubtful if McManus had more than two hours' sleep a night between the election and the court hearing. He appeared before Judge Limbert pale, his eyes deep sunk, his lips thin and bloodless, but his cigar stuck jauntily out of the corner of his mouth and his spirit seemed indomitable. Marsh was in little better case. He felt that on the evidence at hand he would lose, and that the Hoover returns would be accepted. He had ransacked the fifth and sixth wards, the river wards, and had found proof that floaters brought in by McManus had voted and that there had been some repeating. Still, even if all the votes of the floaters he had discovered and all the repeaters who had managed to vote twice — once in each ward — were thrown out, Hoover remained winner on the face of the returns.

It was his intention to show as much fraud as he could, make the bold claim that the returns had been altered in McManus' office, and trust to public sentiment, which unmistakably was with him. He examined the suspected sheets carefully. They seemed regular in every way. He looked for traces of erasure in the figure columns, and there appeared to be none. It was a clever job,

if it was a job, and he was convinced it was, for his watchers held to their stories of the figures that were on the returns they saw filled out in the polling places, and he believed them. Marsh was sure McManus had changed the sheets, and he was forced to admit that the plot was ingeniously planned and perfectly executed.

The courtroom was jammed. McManus had half a dozen lawyers. The court attendants had allowed McManus adherents in the room almost to the exclusion of the Marsh partisans. McManus smiled sneeringly at Marsh and jeered at him, but Marsh was not particularly concerned at that, for he had won his own election to Congress by a small majority, and he felt he had two years ahead of him in which to continue the work of deposing McManus, even if Hoover was declared elected.

The proceedings were quiet and nonsensational. Both sides submitted their affidavits and Judge Limbert decided to hear oral testimony. Witnesses were called. They testified to the voting of floaters, to the repeating done by these floaters — men not entitled to vote in Morganville who had been brought in by McManus and colonised in cheap shacks by the river for a sufficient time to enable them to get on the polling lists. Marsh put Riordan and Jake Spindler on the stand, and both swore they had seen the original returns, on which Carver had forty-seven majority in the fifth ward and sixty-two in the sixth. These wit-

nesses were closely cross-questioned by the McManus lawyers, but stuck to their stories.

Ernest Williams, the political reporter of the *Gazette*, told what he had seen on the street, how a carriage drove up and Trevelyan and two others went upstairs to McManus' headquarters, and how Trevelyan left in about twenty minutes and went to the city hall. Dan Leary, who was copying returns that night for the *Gazette* at the city hall, swore it was his impression that Trevelyan brought in the returns at the time Williams saw Trevelyan go to the city hall. Evidence was introduced showing that the earlier police reports — unofficial, of course — had given the two wards to Carver, thus insuring his election. This completed Marsh's case.

McManus' men went on the stand one after the other and swore glibly that the original figures were as they appeared on the sheets filed at the city hall. The police denied any voting by floaters or repeating. Trevelyan admitted visiting the two wards, but said he had gone merely to see if it was possible to hurry up the returns, that the messengers left a little before he arrived in the fifth ward, and that his visit to McManus was to tell the boss that the returns were all in. He said — swore rather — that he went to the city hall to change his trousers, as he had accidentally rubbed against the hub of the carriage when getting out of it in a hurry and had smeared his usually immaculate pantaloons with axle grease, a condition

which he, as a fastidious dresser, could not abide even at three o'clock in the morning on the deserted streets of Morganville.

The McManus men were explicit and Marsh could not budge one of them. He cross-examined them, using all his skill, but with no results. They doggedly hung to their stories that the original returns showed substantial majorities for Hoover in the two disputed wards. The last of the McManus election officials was a man named Strowlski, a Pole, who was the McManus leader in the sixth ward, where there was a considerable settlement of Strowlski's countrymen. He was questioned by the McManus lawyers and testified smoothly to his share in the counting and to what the count showed. He had the figures by heart and recited them almost before he was asked what they were. Marsh took him in hand when the McManus lawyer had finished, but questioned him rather perfunctorily. Marsh was quite certain he was beaten, and was already planning to take the matter to another court in some other way. Judge Limbert was much interested, and from time to time questioned the witnesses himself on some point he wanted cleared.

Marsh went over every detail of Strowlski's evidence with that witness. He was just about to dismiss him, and was arranging some papers on his table, when he asked, almost without knowledge himself of what the question was, so great was his preoccupation: "I suppose, Mr. Strowlski, that you destroyed the ballots according to law."

"No!" replied Strowlski.

"What!" shouted Marsh, jumping to his feet with such haste that he overturned his chair. "You didn't destroy the ballots?"

"No!"

Instantly every McManus lawyer was on his feet, protesting this was irrelevant and inconsequential and had no bearing on the case, and asking that the answers of the witness be stricken from the record.

McManus started up, gesticulated wildly at Strowlski, and that amiable person sat gazing in amazement at the disturbance his innocent answer had created.

Judge Limbert rapped for order. "The witness may proceed," he said. "It seems to the Court that his testimony is particularly relevant at this point."

"What did you do with them?" asked Marsh, trembling with excitement and walking close to the witness-stand.

"Put them back in the box," Strowlski replied, dazed at the attitude of McManus, who glared at him malignantly.

There was a commotion near the door. Johnnie Trevelyan was running down the aisle. Several McManus men were rushing to get out.

"Officers!" ordered Judge Limbert sharply, "you will close the doors and allow no one to go out or enter until I give permission."

McManus sank back into his seat with a groan. Marsh continued his questioning, speaking kindly

to the witness, who was almost in collapse by this time. He knew he had told something he should not have told, but his slow brain hadn't yet comprehended what it was. He looked pitifully at McManus. The McManus lawyers were in excited consultation. Marsh continued:

"You put the ballots back in the box?"

"Yes, sir."

"What box, Mr. Strowlski?"

"The box we used — the ballot box, you know."

"Oh, yes, the ballot box. And what became of the ballot box?"

"Next day, I suppose, they took it back to the city hall where they store them. I don't know. They always do come round after the boxes and keep them in the city hall cellar."

"So far as you know, then, the sixth-ward ballots are in the box and the box is in the cellar of the city hall?"

"Yes, sir."

Marsh turned in triumph to the judge: "If the Court please," he said, "I think there has come a providential admission into this case. If these ballots were not destroyed and are still in that ballot box in the cellar of the city hall, the merits of this contention can easily be decided. I suggest, Your Honour, that two men, one from each side, be dispatched by the court to bring those fifth and sixth ward ballots here, and that the ballots be examined in this court."

"I shall so order," said the judge.

The McManus lawyers began passionate protests. They contended the court had no jurisdiction in the matter, that the court was not an election canvassing board, that the returns were the only subject under consideration, that this was entirely extraneous and irrelevant to the contention, and that it couldn't be done legally or in any other way.

Judge Limbert smiled grimly. "The proceedings will be suspended," he said, "until the ballot boxes from the fifth and sixth wards are produced in court. Is the city clerk here?"

Johnnie Trevelyan, who had been battling vainly with the court attendants at the door, turned sulkily and said: "Here, sir."

"Then," said the judge, "I shall ask you, Mr. City Clerk, to go with Mr. Whiteside for Mr. Marsh, and Mr. Langley for Mr. McManus, to the room where the ballot boxes are stored, accompanied by two officers whom I shall detail, allow them access to the room, and see to it that the identical boxes, untampered with and locked, are produced forthwith in this court."

Trevelyan looked despairingly at McManus, who sat with his head bowed, chewing savagely at an unlighted cigar.

"Go at once," ordered the judge emphatically. Whiteside and Langley went out. Two court attendants and Johnnie Trevelyan trailed along behind.

"The hearing will suspend, pending the arrival of the ballot boxes," ordered the judge.

Marsh's supporters crowded round him eagerly. "What does it mean?" they asked. "What does it mean?"

"It means," said Marsh reverently, "that God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. It means that Bob McManus over there is going to prison, and that this disreputable conspiracy that has so long existed to control the politics of this city and county is ended, smashed. It means —"

Marsh was intensely in earnest. If the ballots were in the box they would, he firmly believed, show that Carver had carried the sixth ward and that the presumption would be that he carried the fifth ward also. He was jubilant, and he walked over to McManus and said: "I've got you, McManus, and you know it!"

McManus made no reply. He was very pale. His fingers twitched. His deep-sunk eyes burned. His lawyers surrounded him and planned delay, anything to save him. McManus paid no heed. He sat with his head bowed and chewed at his cigar.

Ten minutes later the court attendants carrying two ballot boxes, came in with Whiteside and Langley. Johnny Trevelyan was not with them.

The boxes were placed on the bench in front of Judge Limbert. The McManus lawyers protested the proceeding was extraordinary and irregular.

"That may be," said the judge, "but this is an

extraordinary situation. You may note an exception, if you wish, but I shall proceed."

A long table was moved up in front to the judge's bench. Whiteside was appointed a teller for the Marsh side and Langley for the McManus side. The fifth-ward box was opened first. It was empty.

"You see, Your Honour," said a McManus lawyer. "The whole thing is absurd."

"There's something in the other," Whiteside whispered to Marsh.

"Open the other box!" ordered the judge.

Every person in the courtroom, including the judge, leaned forward eagerly, except Strowlski, who had been forgotten. He sat dejectedly on the witness-stand, looking pathetically now and then at McManus.

The court attendant fumbled with the fastenings, lifted the lid, and Marsh, who was standing just behind him, raised his hand high above his head and shouted: "They're there! They're there!"

"Order in the court," boomed the crier.

Every person in the room had been holding his breath, and at Marsh's shout there came a long-drawn "Ah-h-h!" Strowlski crouched and shivered in his chair. He didn't know what he had done, but he knew he had done something that had injured the boss.

"Are the ballots in the box?" asked the judge.

"Yes, Your Honour," answered the attendant.

"Turn them out on the table and let the count

proceed. Officers, clear the space round the table and allow no one to approach until the count is finished."

The ballots made a little rumpled pile of paper. They were creased and marked and dirty, but to Marsh they looked like etchings done by a master.

The court stenographer was made clerk for the tellers and took a long sheet of paper. He wrote the names "Hoover" and "Carver" on the paper, and sharpened a pencil preparatory to his work. Whiteside and Langley examined each ballot. As they finished the examination they announced "One for Hoover" or "One for Carver," and the clerk made a mark in the proper column. When he had four perpendicular marks he drew the fifth mark slantingly across the four, thus dividing the count into blocks of five.

There were seven hundred and ninety-two ballots in the box, and the count took a long time. Few persons left the courtroom. Most of those present kept tally themselves on backs of envelopes and on scraps of paper. The count continued evenly for two hours. It was very close. Then Carver began to run ahead.

Finally Whiteside said: "The count is finished, Your Honour."

"What do you find?"

"We find that William B. Hoover received 365 votes and Robert R. Carver received 427."

"Sixty-two majority!" shouted Marsh.

There was a wild yell from the Marsh adher-

ents, a yell of triumph and a yell of derision. McManus sat motionless in his chair.

"Order in the court!" boomed the crier.
"Order in the court!"

Judge Limbert looked at Marsh. "Mr. Marsh," he said, "the court has no doubt that your contention has been upheld and will continue the injunction until such time as you desire it vacated. In the meantime, other remedial measures will doubtless suggest themselves."

All Morganville knew of the result in half an hour. There was a great impromptu meeting at the opera house, at which Marsh made a speech, earnest, but good-tempered, counselling immediate action against the men who had tried to debauch the election. In it he tentatively announced he would assume the leadership of the Republican party for the city and county and district. William B. Hoover came out with a card in the afternoon newspapers saying he had no desire to continue a contest for an office he had not fairly won and disclaiming any participation in the frauds. McManus had retired to his headquarters. Not more than six of his former supporters followed him there. Most of them were at the opera-house meeting cheering for Marsh.

XVIII

MRS. MARSH'S DINNER

THERE were enough men on the county committee who were willing to depose McManus as chairman to sign a call for a meeting, and the call was issued and the meeting held. McManus was deposed and Marsh elected in his stead. Marsh devoted the next two weeks to perfecting his organisation. A special grand jury was impanelled to consider the election frauds, and at the suggestion of Marsh enough delays were secured to postpone action until after January first, when Carver came into office as district attorney.

McManus was seen but little about the streets. He remained at home. A few of his friends were loyal to him, but not many. He was nervous, irritable and depressed. His power was gone. He had plenty of money, however, and his case dragged through the courts for two years, when he was fined, and left Morganville to live in Southern California. Johnnie Trevelyan was not heard of for several years. Then a Morganville tourist discovered him working as a clerk in a hotel in Portland, Oregon. He was still an advanced dresser, but had changed his name to William P. Jones.

Mrs. Marsh had taken Dorothy to Washington in September and had insisted on placing her in a most fashionable institution for young ladies. Marsh was so busy with his politics he did not say much, and was not fully aware of the change until he was notified that his daughter's expenses would be more than double what they were the year before. He was inclined to take the girl out of school, but Mrs. Marsh protested so vigorously, and proved so conclusively, to her thinking at any rate, the change meant a great social advance for all the Marshes, that he finally consented. Dorothy's desires were not considered by Mrs. Marsh.

Marsh had little money ahead when he got back to Washington. He had borrowed five thousand dollars from Senator Paxton for his campaign expenses, and it had cost him all of that and a good deal more to elect Carver and himself. There had been some contributions, but not many, for Morganville held Marsh to be well-to-do, so that though they were anxious and eager to help him with advice and counsel, and criticised freely, they were not liberal with cash. Paxton said Marsh need be in no hurry about returning the money he owed, and apparently meant what he said, so Marsh did not let his indebtedness to the senator worry him. He did worry, though, about the increased expenses for his daughter's accomplishment and finishing, and about Mrs. Marsh's determination to have several new gowns, which,

she said, she thought she might manage for eight or nine hundred dollars or at most a thousand.

"Well, Jim," said Senator Paxton a few days after Marsh returned to Washington, "the firm of Paxton and Marsh starts out like a winner."

"Yes," Marsh replied, "it's all right politically, but I want to tell you the junior partner in the combination is no John D. Rockefeller financially."

"Are you broke?"

"Broke is no name to it. I'm smashed. I'm flatter than a flounder. My salary is in hock now for as much as the disbursing officer will let me have, and I've got to find some cash pretty soon or go into genteel bankruptcy."

"Is that so?" The senator seemed deeply concerned.

"It's so-er than anything you know."

Senator Paxton pursed his lips, tapped with his fingers on the edge of his desk. "Well," he said, after a moment's thought, "maybe something will turn up. Meantime I can let you have a thousand or so if it will help you out."

Marsh took a check for a thousand dollars. He hated himself when he took it, but he had to have the money. He felt humiliated; but Paxton made light of the affair, and told Marsh he was sure there would be a financial opportunity before the session was over, and not to bother about repayment until it was easy.

The Marshes were at the same hotel where they had stayed the previous year, the Dewilton. Mrs.

Marsh had announced her arrival to the society editors and was planning to resume her social activities immediately. Inklings of the fight Marsh had made and its dramatic ending had trickled into Washington, and a correspondent who knew Marsh had made a Sunday story of it for his paper, with Marsh's picture two columns wide. Marsh found he was somewhat of a personage when Congress met, and was pleased to note that the organisation leaders were affable and agreeable and apparently knew he was a member. He attended his committee meetings regularly, and had a chance to make a speech that attracted some attention.

"I see you are getting your name into the papers," observed Senator Paxton one day when he and Marsh were talking together.

"Oh, yes," yawned Marsh; "the reporters pester me a good deal."

"Aha!" said Paxton. "So that's your attitude, is it — bothered by the reporters! Well! Well! That, I should say, is a crying shame. There is only one other thing I can think of that equals it for downright discomfort, and that is not to be pestered by the reporters. Jim, you go and take a long look at yourself in the glass. You will observe a rather sturdy, good-looking person, who owes about all he has got to the reporters who are pestering him, as he says. If the reporters hadn't mentioned you you would be back there in Morganville practising law. Don't for Heaven's sake assume with me that pose of in-

difference to publicity. It may go with some of the weak-minded ones, but never with me.

“Let me tell you something. The pose of indifference to what the newspapers say about you is the first and one of the greatest signs of that political hypocrisy that is crystallised here in this Washington outfit. There isn't a man in this Congress or in this Government who is indifferent to publicity, who doesn't yearn for pleasant references to himself in the papers, who doesn't read and reread everything complimentary that is said about himself. It is the public boast of one of the biggest men in the Senate that he cares nothing for what the papers say about him, and never reads them; but I know absolutely that each clipping bureau in this country has standing orders from him to send him every item they can find that has his name in it.

“We affect to think we are hardened to criticism, and all the time we hate it, loathe it. We smile in a superior way and say: ‘Oh, well, the boys have to have something to fill up with,’ whenever they print a pleasant story about us, and privately we gloat over the mention of our names. Get off that pose, Jim! Get all the publicity you can. We need it. It is our staff of life. It works two ways — we love it and we fear it. In the old days it was possible to do a good many things we can't do now, because the reporters were not so numerous and the news-distributing facilities not in the present perfected state. Now those chaps are looking into everything, and you don't

want to be pestered by them. You want to pester them instead, or cultivate them rather, for they can make you or they can mar you, and it's all in the day's work with that crowd of enterprising persons.

"Most public men take a wrong view of the business of the reporter. They think the reporter comes to them because he needs them. That isn't it. The reporter comes to see a public man because that is the way he makes his living. He would much prefer to be having his own fun than to be chasing after a statesman, who nine times out of ten he has sized up to a gnat's heel as to his intrinsic bogusness and his defects and desires. The man who gets along with the highly essential newspaper crowd isn't the man who patronises them, which they resent, or the man who affects to consider them of no consequence in his career, but the man who meets them face to face, treats them squarely, tells them the truth and doesn't try to weigh them down with confidences. Reporters don't want confidential information. They want stuff they can print. They are wise. Most of them were here when we came, and many who are here now will be here when we go. They know the game, and it is hard to deceive them. All you've got to do to be squarely treated is to treat them squarely. They want no favours. They don't hanker for your companionship. Quit trying to fool yourself on this newspaper business, Jim, and go out and play it straight. You need all the publicity you can get, if you are square,

and you don't need any if you are not square. You can help the first and you can't stop the second kind. That's all there is to that."

Paxton walked over to Marsh and patted him on the shoulder. "I'll bet you a box of cigars," he said, "that although you are pestered by reporters, you've got a clipping of that Sunday story with your picture at the top of it in your inside pocket this minute."

Marsh blushed. He had. "Oh, well," he said, "I didn't mean exactly what I said."

"Of course not, and be careful you never do mean it. A public man without publicity becomes a private man so quickly it makes his head swim."

Marsh thought a good deal about what the senator had said, and was impressed when Mrs. Marsh told him incidentally that she considered the society columns in the newspapers to be the greatest levers for social success in Washington.

"Certainly!" commented Mrs. Lyster, who was sitting with them in the hotel parlour when Mrs. Marsh made this remark. "If there is to be no mention of a function in the newspapers a function might as well not be given. What advantage is it to a hostess to work and worry and plan and scheme and intrigue to get distinguished people to come to her dinners or to attend her parties, unless the world knows she is able to snare those distinguished personages? How can she be repaid for all the expense and trouble and the jealousy and the criticism and the social am-

bitions that run counter to hers, except by having the world know, through the kindly ministrations of the society editors, that this hostess has attained sufficient position to drag these honoured guests to her house? If the newspapers were to abolish the society columns the number of social affairs in this town would dwindle to nothing. And that means every kind of social affair, from the biggest down to the most modest, except, of course, family dinner parties where real friends are asked in.

"It is amusing to watch their efforts," continued Mrs. Lyster. "One month I kept track of the various paragraphs — sent in by herself of course — about a young woman who is in what I call the near-cabinet set, the wife of an assistant secretary, you know. Well, in the thirty-one days of that month there were exactly forty-two items about that ambitious social leader, detailing her every movement. If she expected a guest the expectation was announced, then the arrival, then the fact that the guest was there, then the projected departure of the guest, then the actual departure, and then on the following Sunday a résumé of the entire matter. And there are dozens just like her. The society columns in the newspapers may be predicated on society, but more than that, far more, is society predicated on the society columns. We simply couldn't exist without those aids to our advancement."

Marsh looked at his wife and grinned. Mrs.

Marsh said nothing, but when they went upstairs she remarked: "Curiously old-fashioned ideas Mrs. Lyster has, don't you think?"

"Oh, I guess her views are open to argument," Marsh replied.

"Well, James"—she had decided she would call her husband James, as better fitting the dignity of their advanced positions than the Jim of former days—"Well, James, I do not intend to argue with you, and I think it is best for you to know that we are giving a dinner in a fortnight."

"What kind of a dinner?" asked Marsh.

"Oh, a big dinner—thirty or forty guests. I have the invitation list ready."

"And where are we to hold this function, at a dairy-lunch place?"

"We are not. It is to be given at Bangle's."

"Bangle's! Why, Bangle is the most expensive caterer in this town, and that means he's the most expensive on earth."

"And the most fashionable," said Mrs. Marsh, "which is precisely why our dinner is to be given there."

"But, Molly, it will cost a heap of money."

"I don't care if it costs ten thousand dollars. We're going to give the dinner and you've got to pay for it. I am going to take my proper place in the society of this city. Heretofore all my functions have been shoddy and second-rate. Now I'm going to splurge. I have prepared the notices for the papers and sent them in, and the

cards are being engraved, so you can't back out."

Marsh made no reply, but he wondered where the money was coming from. Mrs. Marsh spent the next two days over her invitation lists. She had carefully saved the cards of those who had called on her and who were above the ordinary congressional rank, and she sorted those cards over and over. She planned for a dinner for thirty persons and sent out invitations to the forty most desirable persons, knowing some of them would decline, and she had a second and even a third list ready for emergencies.

Marsh couldn't stop the dinner, so he did what he could to help it. He consulted with Mrs. Marsh about her lists, and suggested some names, including those of Quicksall and Rambo. The invitations went out. In a day or two the responses began to come in. Marsh returned to the hotel on the third night and found Mrs. Marsh crying.

"What's the matter, Molly?" he asked.

"Only six of the people we invited have accepted," she announced tragically, "including Mrs. Paxton for herself and the senator and your friend Quicksall. The rest all politely regretted."

"The devil they did!" exclaimed Marsh. "Well, what's to be done? Shall we give the dinner to the Paxtons and Quicksall and the rest? That would suit my financial condition."

"Oh," flared Mrs. Marsh, "you are always talking about expense! I should think you'd find

a way to get some money so your wife could take her proper place here, considering all the friends you have and all your influence."

"Well," Marsh spoke slowly, "what would you have me do — rob the treasury?"

"Don't be absurd!" she retorted. "Others can make money here; why not you?"

Marsh said nothing more. Mrs. Marsh sent out her second flight of invitations, had a dozen acceptances and managed to get together a party of twenty-four. To be sure she carefully included the names of those "invited" in the announcement she sent to the newspapers, and in the notice she sent in on the night of the dinner contented herself with the line, "among those present were," which included only the biggest ones instead of the whole list.

It was a mixed company. Senator Paxton and his wife were there, and an assistant secretary or two, two Latin-American diplomats, a bureau chief from the Treasury Department, an army couple and the rest were representatives. The dinner was a good one, correctly served, and the party was jolly, for Mrs. Marsh had much tact, and knew what to do to make people comfortable at a function of this kind, even if some of the materials were not up to the original standard she had set.

Quicksall had walked up to Bangle's from his hotel, and Marsh took him back in the carriage he had hired, after leaving Mrs. Marsh at the Dewilton,

"Nice party," said Quicksall.

"Pretty good," Marsh replied; "but I'm afraid Mrs. Marsh is a bit disappointed."

"Why?"

"Some of the people she figured on couldn't come."

"Oh, well," said Quicksall, "she'll get them yet. She's going to win at this game, don't worry about that."

Marsh made no comment. They rode in silence for a minute or two and then Quicksall asked, quite irrelevantly, Marsh thought: "Made any money lately?"

"Not much."

"Want to go in on a little pool in copper?"

"Copper?"

"Yes, there's going to be a movement pretty soon, within the next ten days, in a copper stock I know about. I can put you in for a few shares if you like."

"The truth is, Quicksall," said Marsh, "I'm practically broke. That fight of mine out home took about all my money."

"Oh," Quicksall replied, as if that were a matter of no consequence, "I'll carry you for a chunk of it, and if it loses we can settle afterward."

XIX

HOOKED

DOROTHY MARSH was not a beautiful girl, in the sense of having regular features and perfect proportions, but by the time she was nearing her eighteenth birthday she had developed into a most attractive one. She had the black hair and black eyes of her father and her colouring was exquisite. She was slender, graceful, animated and vivacious, was fond of out-of-door things and clever at her books. Good-humoured and sensible, like her father, she was inclined to look on her mother's social aspirations as rather a joke. Although she had inherited Mrs. Marsh's taste for dress and her tact in conversation, Dorothy did not share her mother's social ambitions, and had little patience with the endless and, as she thought, stupid routine of Washington society.

Her incarceration — for such she considered it — in the fashionable boarding school had been quite against her wishes, but she tried to make the best of it. So she entered into all the amusements at the school, and studied only enough to maintain herself in the fairly good graces of her teachers. She solemnly went about her lessons

in deportment, wherein the rigidly correct ladies who had the girls in charge taught them how to enter a room, how to leave a room, how to sit, how to stand, how to behave at table, at reception, in a receiving line, at a ball, how to eat, how to sip their beverages from their glasses, how to conduct themselves before their maids — in short, made perfect ladies out of them, fashioning them, as well as they were able, after the accepted ladylike models of the day. Most of the other girls in the school were daughters of rich parents, and Mrs. Marsh had been obliged to use much diplomacy and some influence to get Dorothy enrolled, not that her position was not as good as that of the daughter of the manufacturing millionaire, or the cotton-mill owner, but because the Marsh family was not rated very high financially.

One afternoon Marsh was called to the telephone at the Capitol.

"It's Dorothy," said a voice.

"Hello, daughter," Marsh replied. "What is it?"

"Popsie, I want to have a talk with you."

"Come over to the hotel then."

"That wouldn't do. I want to have a talk with just you."

"You mean you don't want mamma to be round?"

"Yes, that's exactly what I mean. Will you take me to dinner somewhere?"

"I can't very well without taking your mother.

Let's see — but how can you get away at night? "

Marsh heard a little laugh at the end of the wire. "Don't let that fuss you, popsie. Just tell me where I can have a chat with you."

Marsh thought a minute. "What time can you get out?" he asked.

"Half-past seven."

"Well, I'll try to arrange it and I'll call you on the phone later."

Marsh called up the Dewilton and asked for Mrs. Marsh. "What are you doing to-night, my dear?" he inquired.

Mrs. Marsh said she had a club meeting to attend.

"And how long shall you be busy?"

Mrs. Marsh thought she would be home by ten o'clock, and asked why he wanted to know.

"Oh," Marsh lied glibly, "I have a conference to-night and I wondered what your plans were. That's all."

He rang off and sent a note to Dorothy, telling her to be at the hotel at eight o'clock. Mrs. Marsh had gone to her club meeting by the time Dorothy danced into the Marsh rooms, her face aglow with excitement. "Isn't it a lark?" she laughed. "Arranging a secret meeting with one's own father. It's really quite romantic!"

Marsh kissed her. He was devoted to his vivacious daughter.

"What is it, Dodie?" he asked, using her baby name. "But first tell me how you got out of that

prison of yours? ” He looked at her sternly and then kissed her again.

“ Promise never to tell? ”

“ Never. ”

“ Well, then, I came out by the back door. ”

“ Came out by the back door? But how did you get out of the back door? ”

“ I unlocked it, stupid, and walked out, walked right out in the exact manner Miss Angeline Prim, our deportment teacher, informs us is the proper way for a perfect lady to leave a room. Like this ”—and she gave her father an exaggerated imitation of Miss Prim’s correctest method of polite departure after a call is over.

Marsh laughed. “ Still,” he said, “ that doesn’t explain how you got a key. I thought all you young ladies were immured in that school except on state occasions, when your teachers or chaperones take you out for the air. ”

“ That’s the secret—that’s the fatal secret. Promise again you’ll never tell, not even mamma. ”

“ I promise! ”

“ Well,” said Dorothy, reaching into her bag, “ here’s the key. ” She produced a brass key, which Marsh examined curiously.

“ Where did you get it? ”

“ A girl let me take it. ”

“ Where did the girl get it? ”

“ That,” laughed Dorothy, “ is the real secret. Popsie, you are now gazing on the greatest, the most sacred, the most profound of the hidden mysteries of Miss Capulet’s Fashionable Semin-

ary for the Training of Young Ladies of the Better Classes. For twenty long and stylish and exclusive years this key has been handed down from one class to another. It is guarded religiously. Only the elect know it exists. When one set of girls graduates, is 'finished,' those girls give the key to the girls who are to be completed the next year, and here it is, and here am I, being one of the elect. But remember, you mustn't tell."

Marsh promised again. Dorothy sat down. "Seriously, papa, I just had to talk to you or burst!"

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, I hate all this formality and social foolishness that they teach me as if I intended to spend my life gliding gracefully into a drawing room and gliding out again, after I have stood gracefully about or sat gracefully down and risen gracefully, and chatted with graceful animation with the automatons who are gracefully disposed round the room. I hate it. I want to go back to Morganville and forget there is such a thing as exclusive society, and that it is bad form to do this perfectly natural thing, and worse form to be oneself and not a parrot, parroting Miss Prim's correct conversation for correct young ladies."

"But you know that's impossible."

"Why is it? I can go back and live with grandma, where I can get out-of-doors and not be worried about the width of my skirt or the proper way to eat ice cream."

"Pshaw, Dorothy, your mother wouldn't hear of it for a moment."

"Can't you coax her, popsie? Can't you?"

"Coax her?" Marsh laughed. "No daughter, I can't coax her, nor can I do anything except meekly bear my burdens along with you. She wants to succeed socially, and I want her to, of course. She intends you shall be a social success. This training is necessary, she says. It is essential, she thinks. Mamma has great ambitions, not only for herself but for you and for me. We must help her, not hinder her."

"But, popsie, I hate it."

"Possibly you will feel differently about it when you have been finished"—Marsh laughed—"by Miss Capulet and her able assistants and are out having your fling at it here in Washington."

"I never shall. It isn't real. It all seems like a game."

"That is exactly what it is, dear—a game," he said gravely. "And you and I are playing that game, my girl; and we must play according to the rules. You're dead right!" he exclaimed; "it's all a game—my part of it, your mother's part of it, your part of it—and the stakes are what? Place; the right or the assumed right to consider oneself a little better than one's neighbour, to have a little more trumpery importance, to get a little useless distinction according to standards that are as artificial as the things measured by them. You are right, Dorothy, it is a game; but unless we play it we are played upon by it. Once we take a hand

we must stay until somebody stronger defeats us, and the whole of it depends on knowing how to use those cards so we shall not be defeated but shall defeat others, no matter what the consequences to the others may be. It's useless to protest, Dorothy. You are in this atmosphere and so am I, and we must breathe this air, for there is no other that will sustain us in the life of the kind we have set out to lead. Come, I'll take you back to school."

Marsh thought much about Dorothy's protest, and he was sorry for her, as indeed he was at times sorry for himself, but he could see no way out. He was in the game and he must stay in, or confess failure and come to defeat. There seemed to be some force behind him, invisible but potent, pushing him into intimate relations with men whom he had come to know as selfish, self-seeking politicians, using the party and the country and the people for their own ends, for their own aggrandisement and their own perpetuation in power, and he knew there was only one thing he could do besides continue on as he was being directed — he could revolt. He could declare his independence. That would mean his political ruin, and his career was very dear to him.

A day or two later he had a letter from Quicksall giving him the details of the copper pool. There was a rich prospect in Arizona where the workings had been kept secret. A big vein had been struck, and the syndicate had bought twenty-five thousand shares of the stock of the original

company at two dollars a share. Marsh had been put in for three thousand shares. The plan was to make the announcement of the strike, fully verified, for it was a real strike, and at the proper time put the stock on the market. Options at two dollars a share had been taken on a block of fifty thousand shares to be held in reserve. If the mine was as good as it promised to be the stock would be proportioned among the syndicate members to hold, but in any event Quicksall was sure the announcement of the strike would send the stock up some dollars a share and anticipated a good turn, with the optioned stock in reserve, to be sold, kept or turned back by a refusal to take up the option when it expired in case circumstances were not propitious.

Marsh watched the curb-market news carefully for several days. Then one morning the New York papers all had stories of the big strike in the Marine Mine, and Quicksall telephoned to Marsh that afternoon from New York the demand had been very active and the twenty-five thousand shares had been sold at an average profit of nine dollars a share. Next morning Marsh received a letter from Quicksall inclosing a cheque for \$10,500, and notifying him that the remainder of his profit, after deducting the \$6,000 for the original payment of two dollars a share for his three thousand shares, had been withheld to take up the five thousand shares of the optioned stock allotted to him, for which he would receive certificates in due time. That meant Marsh had

\$10,500 in cash, that he owned five thousand shares, bought for him at two dollars a share, and worth on the market nine dollars a share, or \$45,000. The cheque for \$10,500 instead of for \$11,000, Quicksall explained, meant that \$500 had been deducted for Marsh's share of the expense of the operation, and the commissions.

Marsh was dumfounded. He had no idea he would make so much money or that Quicksall would make so much money for him. Again he was tortured by the why of it. Why had Quicksall done this for him? What was back of it? Why had they singled him out? He knew the net was being thrown over him, and he couldn't understand why they were taking such pains to capture him. How could he be of benefit to them? What was the reason? He sat for hours trying to get a solution, and all the time the cheque for \$10,500 lay on the table before him, smiling up at him, laughing joyously in his face — and he needed the money.

As he walked home that night, after a listless day in the House, he met Rambo.

"Hello, Marsh," said Rambo cheerily, "did you get a slice of that copper melon?"

"Yes," Marsh replied, "Quicksall let me have some of the stock. Say, Rambo, why has Quicksall taken such a shine to me?"

"Oh," said Rambo lightly, "you're a good fellow. Come on in and have a drink?"

Marsh lay awake for hours that night turning the matter over in his mind. He considered all

his relations with Quicksall. That friendly person had never asked him to do anything save dine with him. He was far from a reasonable explanation when he fell asleep. At breakfast next morning Mrs. Marsh gave him Dorothy's bill for extras at Miss Capulet's seminary. It was for \$600 and covered only half the term. Marsh put the cheque for \$10,500 in the bank on his way up to the Capitol.

Marsh found a note from the Speaker's secretary in his box in the House post-office, asking him to drop in to the speaker's room that morning. He went round about eleven o'clock and was soon admitted to the inner office.

"Hello, Marsh," greeted the speaker. "Glad to see you. Sit down."

Marsh said he was equally glad to see the speaker, and waited to hear why he had been summoned.

"Marsh," the speaker continued, "the boys think you are just the man to defend the Administration's reciprocity programme on the floor."

"What's that?" asked Marsh.

"I say the boys have been talking the matter over and have decided you are just the man to make the big speech defending the Administration's reciprocity policy on the floor. We must have a smashing statement of our side of the case for public consumption. We've got the votes, you know," and the speaker chuckled, "but we need the excuse for them, and we think you

can do it better than anybody. What do you say?"

"But, Mr. Speaker," stammered Marsh, "I — I —"

"Oh, hell," said the speaker, "I know what you are thinking. You aren't quite in line with it. Well, forget that, my son. It's a party policy and it's an Administration measure. It's going through whooping, but we want the country to understand it. You are a Republican, and you can take your stand as a loyal member of the Grand Old Party."

"I'll think it over."

"You don't have to think it over; decide now. It's a big chance for you. It shows we have confidence in you, despite that youthful indiscretion of yours when you jumped away from us on that land bill a year or so ago. There are half a dozen men who are aching to make this speech, which will attract attention not only in every state in the Union but abroad, and this is your opportunity. How about it?"

"All right," consented Marsh, feeling tremendously flattered. "I'll do my best at it."

"Good boy," said the speaker, reaching over and patting him on the arm. "Go to it. This is Tuesday. Can you be ready on Friday afternoon?"

"Yes."

"Fine. It will come up about two o'clock. I'll see to it that all the boys are on hand to hear

you. By the way, seen our friend Quicksall lately? ”

“ A few days ago,” answered Marsh, looking keenly at the speaker.

“ Good boy, Quicksall; nice a fellow as I know. His people are interested in this proposition.”

Marsh felt tempted to refuse, but he walked out. He was beginning to see things. Later in the day Byron, with an afternoon paper in his hand, came over and sat down beside Marsh, who was listening to a Democratic attack on Republican extravagance by a perfervid orator from the South.

“ Marsh,” said Peyton, handing him the paper, “ I see they have hooked you.”

“ What do you mean? ”

“ Why, it is announced in this paper you are going to make the speech defending this rotten reciprocity programme of the organisation.”

“ What of it? ” Marsh asked, secretly feeling that he had indeed been hooked, for he realised the news had been given to the reporters as soon as he had consented to speak.

“ Oh, nothing, if you can't see it yourself,” Byron said, moving off. “ Nothing at all, my dear boy; only you started out right, and they've thrown a switch on you and run you in on their particular sidetrack. More power to you, only when the big bust-up comes don't say I didn't warn you.”

XX

THE ATLAS LAND COMPANY

MARSH spent Wednesday and Thursday in retirement preparing his speech. He knew he must make a great speech, not only because his own reputation was in the balance, but because it seemed to him, after considering the situation from every angle, his future lay with the organisation, and he knew from what he had seen and heard the organisation took good care of its inner members. He argued that his selection for this important action proved he was being considered at any rate for membership, and he knew the ordinary member, who was used merely as a voting unit when the time came, had about as many legislative functions as a sheep and resembled that docile animal in many particulars. He decided he wouldn't be a sheep, and concluded he might just as well forget his qualms of conscience and do as he was constantly advised to by men who were eminently successful both in obtaining and keeping position and perquisites for themselves, play the game.

Word had gone out that the majority members should all be in their seats on the afternoon for

the speech, and they were all there. The newspapers had printed paragraphs about the forthcoming defence of the Administration and had given brief résumés of Marsh's career in Congress. He was spoken of as an eloquent and forceful orator, and that was enough to jam the galleries, for Washington people love a show, especially when it is free. Mrs. Marsh who was most becomingly dressed, and a party of ladies from the Dewilton had front seats in the reserved gallery. Marsh looked up at her and smiled and waved his hand, and a little description of this loving act was included in the running stories of the event the boys up in the press galleries were sending to the wires, sheet by sheet.

Two o'clock came. The regular order was demanded by the majority leader. There was a hush for a moment and everybody turned toward Marsh, who had taken a seat on the center aisle. His stenographer sat beside him with a great pile of notes and reference books. Marsh was a man of prodigious memory. It was his custom to write a speech, read it once, and then talk without referring to the manuscript. He rarely strayed away from his original text, but when he did, it was merely to elaborate some point, and he always came back to the words as he had written and memorised them. He was fluent, graceful, logical, and his voice was musical and had excellent carrying properties. He had put on his frock-coat, wore a red carnation in his buttonhole and was smiling and self-possessed.

He rose and the chairman of the Committee of the Whole recognised him. He spoke for two hours, marshalling a great array of facts to show the virtue of the Administration contention, making his plea logical and consecutive and demolishing the claims of the opposition with a volley of eloquent denunciation. He ridiculed the Democrats, scoffed at those members of his own party who were opposed to the measure, showed how this was a great and historic party policy, quoted figures to prove that it would benefit the people — to whom he referred frequently and with great affection — and concluded with a burst of eloquence that brought cheers from the galleries. Applause had been liberal. His colleagues listened intently, and encouraged him by loud hand-clapping. He was not interrupted many times by questions, for his speech was so strong all wanted to hear it and when he had finished, had passed his hand for the last time over his hair and then flung his arm out as if he were desirous of throwing away his fingers — his favourite gesture — they surrounded him, congratulated him, patted him on the back, and Marsh felt he had arrived. The newspapers carried long stories about the speech. Marsh was a figure in the House.

He read the reports of his speech eagerly and was gratified to find the reporters had used a considerable amount of the advance copy he had carefully sent to them and to the news agencies. As he was deep in the New York papers next day Senator Paxton walked into Marsh's room.

“Ha, Jim,” he said, “I observe that that little subject of publicity seems to interest you. The reporters didn’t pester you any yesterday, I take it.”

Before Marsh could reply half a dozen members, whom he did not know save by sight, came in and shook hands with him effusively, complimenting him on the speech and talking as if they were life-long friends of his.

Paxton laughed as they filed out. “There they go,” he said, “the reflected-glory boys, the chaps who cannot do anything themselves, but seek to get importance by attaching their colourless personalities to the man who can do things. Washington is full of them. They strut and sputter and declaim roundly how ‘My friend Marsh’ said this or that to them, and how ‘I said to my friend Marsh,’ and thus and so, with the ‘I’ in every sentence. Poor chaps, they are only twelfth-carbon-copies of the real thing and know it, and they strive to elevate themselves by tacking on to others. Vanity, Jim, all vanity — the pitiful, pitiable, but innumerable galaxy of reflected-glory boys!”

The senator laughed again. “I used to know a very pompous newspaper correspondent here, who made up with fake dignity and loud-voiced opinions what he lacked in ability. He was a perfect type of the reflected-glory boy. About twice a week he would go over to the White House and stand round for an hour or so until he got a glimpse of the president. Then he would go back

to his office and write a long slug of his own windy ideas on political affairs, which always began: 'I saw President Cleveland to-day,' giving the impression that all the piffle he spun out came from the president. And even his astute editors fell for it, until old Grover put out a brief statement one day saying he hadn't spoken to this chap for six months, and that ended his little exaltation of his negligible self."

"How'd you like the speech?" asked Marsh.

"Bully! It was a corker! I'm glad you made it, for you are in the swim now, which not only adds to your personal and political increment, but also does a heap for the flourishing firm of Paxton and Marsh."

They discussed some political affairs out in the home state, including several pressing matters, talked over various candidates for postmaster-ships, and decided to recommend one or two to replace McManus men. As the senator was leaving, he said:

"By the way, Marsh, I've put you down for a few shares in the Atlas Land Company that's in process of organisation."

"What's the Atlas Land Company?"

"Oh, some of us are going to do some operating in real estate just outside the city. It might be a good thing. I can fix it if you want in. Better take some."

"How much will it cost?" asked Marsh.

"Not much. The capital is \$200,000, but only a tenth of it is paid in. I've put you down

for a hundred shares, par a hundred dollars, and you'll have to pay in only a thousand dollars at the start."

"All right," said Marsh.

A few days later there came a request to the District of Columbia Committee to allow one of the street-car companies to extend its lines for a few miles out one of the main streets. Nobody objected, and the permission was whipped into legislative shape and recommended.

Rambo met Marsh about a week later.

"What do you think of those hogs anyhow?" he asked. "They bottle up a good thing, and when it is ready to spill they grab it all themselves. You and I should have had some of that."

"Some of what?"

"Why, some of that street-car extension melon."

"How was there any melon-cutting in that?"

Rambo laughed. "Marsh," he said, "for a gent who is playing in this game you have less conception of the value of your cards or of how to play them than any man I know. Why, when that extension is made of course the land out there will be available for subdivision and can be unloaded profitably. Nothing doing though. As soon as I heard about it I hustled round to the real-estate fellows to try to get a few acres of it at acre prices, and I found a company has bought every good acre there is."

"What company?" asked Marsh, with a sudden sinking of the heart.

"Oh, a bunk organisation called the Atlas Land Company. I don't know who is in it, but they are wise all right."

Marsh went to see Senator Paxton. "Paxton," he said, "I can't take that Atlas Company stock."

"Why not?"

"Because that company is directly interested in the extension of that street-car line, and when I voted on it I was voting contrary to law, because I had a direct interest, too, as a stockholder."

"Pshaw!" the senator replied, laughing. "If you will examine the records you will discover that the Atlas Land Company didn't take over that land until the extension was authorised by law."

"But," protested Marsh, "who sold the land to the Atlas Company?"

"That," said Senator Paxton, "is another story and not of concern in this discussion. I figure we'll make a little money out of that, not much, but enough to buy a few cigars."

Marsh went away. He argued with himself it was all right. He knew in his heart that it wasn't, but he was playing the game.

Mrs. Marsh talked with her husband that night about money. She had heard many stories of how representatives and senators make large fees and she thought Marsh should have some of these.

"Besides," she said, "you have opportunities for information that should be valuable to you with all your influential friends."

"What kind of information?" asked Marsh.

"Any kind," she replied vaguely. "I know there are chances here to make money, and that it is necessary for us to have more money than you are making, as necessary for my social success as well as for your political success. In order to achieve what I am aiming for I must be able to compete with other women who are engaged in aiding their husbands socially. I am as economical as I can be, but I need money. My plans are maturing. I can see my way clear to success. But you must help me, not hinder me by refusing to make the most of your opportunities."

"Molly," said Marsh, "I am afraid you don't understand."

"There is one thing I understand," she replied, "and that is that if you have had information that helped you, and if you know at all what is going on, you must have information and influence that will help others. Besides, you are a lawyer. Why can't you get retainers here? There must be men who could use your services if you would look round and find them instead of devoting yourself all the time to that stupid congressional work."

"I have obligations I must respect," said Marsh.

"You have obligations to me that are fully as great as any you owe to politics or party," she replied. And Marsh made no reply.

XXI

THE CLIMBER CLIMBS

MRS. MARSH had achieved a rather notable success in her social campaign. She had devoted nearly every waking hour to it, had assiduously cultivated those higher in position and with greater wealth, had wept privately over rebuffs, but had met them publicly with smiling face and apparent indifference, had pruned and pruned again her calling list, dropping an undesirable from one end of it as soon as she was able to add a desirable at the other. She made her calls regularly and studied the social fabric of Washington, that is, the official social fabric, for residential society in the Capital, except so far as it comprehends a certain residential set that flocks with itself, is but an adjunct to official society.

She had learned about rank early, and had predicated her campaigns on the somewhat elastic system of precedence, which, she found, could be rigid enough on occasion. She knew the head and centre of official society was the White House, of course, and she had regularly left her cards there, and had received not only the invitations to the big receptions, which were common

and came as a matter of course to her as wife of a representative, but had been asked twice to smaller functions given by the wife of the president, and had high hopes of being one of the select party in the Blue Room at some notable event.

She had found the classification of the various branches of the Government, in a social sense, to be as old as the Government. After the White House there came the ladies of the Supreme Court of the United States, then the ladies of the Cabinet, then the senatorial ladies and then the congressional ladies, who had various degrees of importance. Interlocked in a way was the near-cabinet set, and also the wives of certain subordinate officials, such as commissioners and bureau chiefs. Then, too, there was the army and navy society and the diplomatic set. She discovered many subdivisions in this, or cliques, rather, and had not been long in ascertaining there was a sharp demarcation in importance and prestige between the European diplomatists and the diplomatists from the Far East and the Latin-American countries. The ambassadors of the great powers were the leaders naturally, but second and even third and fourth secretaries of the chancelleries of Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Russia and Italy considered themselves far superior in a social way to ambassadors and ministers from Latin-American countries, and, having made the distinction themselves, were so considered by aspiring hostesses.

Her four seasons in Washington had taught

her many things, the most important of which was that there were scores of other women who were engaged in the same warfare as herself, battling to push themselves into the exclusive circles. She early realised the advantage the socially ambitious woman has when she comes to Washington, through the rule that permits her to call first on the older residents, either official or local, of the city, instead of waiting for these experienced and advanced persons to come to call on her. She found she could call on anybody, and if she wanted recognition she must go out and seek it herself and not wait for recognition to come to her. By the simple expedient of leaving her cards regularly she was included in many invitation lists for general affairs, even at the embassies, and when her husband began to get recognition in the House the Marshes were asked to smaller and more exclusive functions, especially after his reciprocity speech. Word had gone out that Marsh had been taken up by the organisation, and there were plenty of people in official life who were quite willing, indeed anxious, to cultivate the wife of a man who was in the good graces of the organisation, and most likely would come to be a part of it.

Her experience had taught her that the society of Washington is not based on any desire for human intercourse, but on a desire for influence. Every person in Washington wants something and almost every person in Washington wants everything. Hence the people to get on good terms with are the people who may be useful in advanc-

ing social, political or other ambitions. She early had a lesson as to this phase of it. She grew to know the wife of an important man in the State Department, the head of a bureau. This wife had made her diplomatic calls for two years, leaving her cards and the cards of her husband, her husband's cards having nothing on them but his name.

One day in the third year the wife discovered, when she was about to set out on her round of diplomatic calls, she had none of her husband's plain cards left, and she took a handful of his official cards, bearing his name and the line: "Department of State." She called as usual and was received everywhere in the usual indifferent fashion. No one remembered her. The hostesses didn't seem to care whether she stayed a minute or an hour. But within a few days invitations began to shower in on them, invitations to all the general functions and to some of the more exclusive ones. That line "Department of State," on the husband's card had worked the change. The astute diplomatic hostesses had observed it, and they hurried to compliment a woman whose husband, as they had found after her visit, held an important place in the State Department.

Mrs. Marsh also had learned the value of titles. She knew the distinction it gave a paragraph in the social columns to have an under secretary or two, who was a count or some other kind of a sprig of nobility, included in the names of "Among those invited." She had discovered that a repu-

tation for good food and plenty of wine helps as much as anything else. She had resolved to take a house when she returned to Washington the following season, for she considered herself on secure enough footing to do some real climbing. So she made her plans to that end, having in mind, of course, the great ambition of her life, next to her own success, which was to introduce Dorothy to society as one of the buds of the forthcoming season, and to marry her to some man whose money and position would give her own and Dorothy's careers added impetus. She had watched the little, titled under secretaries, but decided neither Dorothy nor her father would consent to a marriage merely for a decadent title, even if such a marriage could be arranged, so she had rather regretfully dismissed that idea from her mind, and had planned to look about among the young men of good family and of wealth. She had several desirable chaps in mind, and she assayed them carefully, inquired into their social standing and their fortunes, and finally selected four, any one of whom she considered a suitable person for an alliance with the house of Marsh.

Meantime her own evolution had been remarkable. She had made herself over practically and was a charming and an attractive woman. She was artificial, without much of heart or sentiment, but she concealed that rather cleverly, and was so vivacious, so clever, so up-to-the-minute both in her gowns and in her information, that the men liked to talk to her. She was a genius at

economies in luxury. She had discovered a stable, kept by a man named Maxwell, where she could obtain stylish carriages with an "M" on the door, and she made an arrangement to have one of these and a particular coachman, the best-looking one, every time she went out, thus giving the impression that it was her private carriage.

She had found how to get a hairdresser by the month to come to her each morning, saving her the bother of going to the hairdressing shops, and she engaged this girl also at a monthly rate. Under her direction the hairdresser fashioned coiffures for Mrs. Marsh that were the envy of her friends as they were the admiration of her acquaintances. She engaged a maid who had a rudimentary knowledge of facial massage and the application of creams and lotions, and she taught her how to manicure, for in the long years when she had manicured her own nails Mrs. Marsh had become proficient at it. A skilled and competent negro woman, who went out to private houses, was engaged as her masseuse at a dollar a treatment; and her dressmaker was terrorised at her definite knowledge of how she wanted her gowns made, and driven to desperation by her exactions, but careful to keep her patronage, for Mrs. Marsh had become one of the most stylishly gowned women in the city.

As soon as she heard of her husband's copper windfall she went to New York and bought a set of expensive furs, and she demanded a jewel or two to supplement the rather mediocre rings and brooches

that she had obtained in years past as birthday and anniversary presents. She had other jewels in mind, but she was content to wait, only she insisted on turning in a number of her smaller jewels and supplementing the proceeds with as much money as she could get in order to get one striking diamond ornament, preferring one good jewel to a number of inferior ones. She sent abroad for a certain kind of imitation pearl she heard about, and wore them at a function of importance, mentioning in the note she sent to the society editors that "Mrs. Marsh wore a magnificent pearl necklace." Everybody congratulated her on this beautiful ornament, although they said behind her back it positively must be imitation. However, so were all the pearls the carpers wore.

About this time automobiles began to be the thing. Mrs. Marsh spent hours in finding an automobile that would suit her purposes. She finally ran down a young man who had a machine with a crest on its door, and who was not averse to renting both machine and crest, with a chauffeur, for a reasonable price by the hour. She paid half the cost of a new uniform for the chauffeur, adopted the crest for her own, and people soon thought the automobile was hers and not hired. She went through all the florists' shops until she found a little one on a side street where the florist was glad enough to make rates for her on promise of steady business. She insisted that Marsh should cultivate the keeper of the botanical gardens and get what could be obtained there,

for she came to know that one of the perquisites of an influential member of Congress is the loan of potted plants, ferns and other of the rare specimens grown in the old greenhouses near the Capitol. She discovered this one morning after a coming-out party for the daughter of a Western senator. She was a guest at the function, and had observed the fine palms in the drawing-room and envied them. Next morning she was driving past this house and she saw men carrying out these palms and placing them in a wagon, and on the side of the wagon was painted: "U. S. Botanical Gardens." A few inquiries were made and then Marsh, under her direction, demanded his share of the ferns, palms and plants whenever Mrs. Marsh needed any for her social affairs.

They gave a couple more dinners at Bangle's, and these were much better, as to the class of guests, than the first one they had given. The old Bruxton Hotel set had been thrown in the discard, and there had been a process of elimination at the Dewilton. Mrs. Marsh was cold-blooded in her work of selection. She had no close friends. Every woman she added to her list was an improvement socially over the one she replaced. She was much gratified to observe that the society notes in the newspapers concerning her doings came nearer the top of the column than they did formerly, and her picture had been printed several times. She was assiduous in her club duties, and contrived to be named as a patroness for a fashionable benefit for a fashionable charity, which

was a great thing, for her name was printed with the names of many of the most exclusive women of the city, albeit it cost Marsh a hundred dollars for a box at the theatre where the benefit was held and another hundred for various embellishments Mrs. Marsh required.

Dorothy saw her father now and then, and was progressing rapidly toward her completion as a perfected specimen of Miss Capulet's idea of a society young lady. Her commencement came in May, when she was given a diploma that recited that she had graduated with honours from Miss Capulet's institution, was overwhelmed with flowers, cried over by Mrs. Marsh and congratulated on her escape by her father. Congress was still in session, so Dorothy came to the Dewilton to stay a few weeks before going to Morganville and to enjoy Washington, which at that season of the year is the most beautiful city in the world. She was glad the "finishing" process was over, and she had maintained her point of view, notwithstanding the efforts of Miss Capulet and her able assistants to make a fashionable automaton out of her.

A few nights after Dorothy returned to the Dewilton Mrs. Marsh introduced the subject nearest to her heart. They were sitting on a balcony that was outside their room. The air was balmy and the night perfect. Marsh was smoking, Dorothy was looking down toward the Monument, which towered, a shaft of silver in the moonlight, when Mrs. Marsh began:

"Dorothy," she said, "I trust you have made no plans for the summer."

"Why, no, mother," the girl replied; "except to go back to Morganville."

"We shall spend a very quiet summer," Mrs. Marsh continued.

"Thank Heaven!" said Marsh beneath his breath.

"Yes, we shall spend a very quiet summer resting and preparing for social duties in the fall."

"Oh, mother," protested Dorothy; "you don't intend to shove me into your society, do you?"

"Shove you?" replied Mrs. Marsh, annoyed.

"No, I do not intend to shove you; but I intend that you shall be introduced in a manner that befits your position."

"What's that?" asked Marsh.

"I said," repeated Mrs. Marsh, "it is my intention to bring Dorothy out in the fall."

"Bring her out of what?" Marsh frowned as he asked the question.

"Bring her out into society. Introduce her formally. She is eighteen now, her education is completed and she must be introduced."

"Oh, mother!" protested Dorothy again, reaching over and taking her father's hand. "Must I?"

"I fail to see where the hardship exists. I consider you very fortunate. This fall several daughters of very well-known families are to be brought out, and I hear that one of the daughters of the president is to make her *début*. Think of

the advantage that will bring you! Think of the social éclat in coming out the same year as a president's daughter! Why, you will be invited everywhere. You will have the entrée to the very best houses. It is a wonderful opportunity."

"She can trail along with the big ones, eh?" commented Marsh. "I can't see much in that."

"It doesn't make any difference whether you can see much or little in it, James Marsh," Mrs. Marsh replied, "for all my plans are made. Why, I know two women in this city who have held back their daughters one for a year and another for two years, so they might bring them out next fall with the daughters of some of the exclusive families. One poor girl is over twenty, and she has been kept in school and in schoolgirl frocks for two years waiting for this year. However," she added complacently, "Dorothy is very fortunate and so are we, James, for she need not wait. The *débutantes* who come out next fall will be very advantageous to us. It is an exceptional opportunity."

"I still fail to see what difference it makes," insisted Marsh. "Why must Dorothy be thrown into this bogus game just because the daughter of a president is coming out and the daughters of a few of the important people? Doesn't she get anywhere off her own?"

Mrs. Marsh shrugged her shoulders. "I am not much interested in what you think of the matter," she said. "The advantages are apparent to me. In the first place I shall set Dorothy's

coming-out party early, and the invitation list will include all the recognised smart girls who are coming out this year. Dorothy will be pictured in the papers in company with the daughter of the president and the daughters of the other prominent families. She will be invited to the houses of these people. She will have the tremendous benefit of their social prestige. She will be a bud in the same year with very fashionable girls and for that reason come to be one of their set. These girls will come to our house —”

“To our house?” exclaimed Marsh.

“Yes,” Mrs. Marsh repeated calmly, “to our house. Of course now that Dorothy is of an age to be introduced to society we shall take a house and live as befits our position and the position she will assume, instead of poked up in a common hotel with a lot of common people. It is all decided. I have inspected several suitable places, and we shall rent one, the lease to date from the first of next October.”

“How much will it cost?” asked Marsh.

“It is too early to talk of that. The great question is to get the right house. I found one place that I think will suit, where the rent is three thousand dollars a season, furnished.”

“Three thousand dollars a season!” Marsh jumped from his chair.

“Sit down, James,” said Mrs. Marsh. “We’ve got to have a house even if it costs four thousand, so you might as well make up your mind to it. Ever since I have been in this city I have

slaved and toiled to advance you. I have now arrived at a place where my efforts are beginning to bear fruit. We are in a position to grasp a wonderful opportunity. Think of our daughter being introduced in society in the same year as a president's daughter and the daughter of several senators and two of the richest women in this city. It will establish us. It will make us. It is all settled. I shall rent a house before I leave Washington."

Dorothy looked at the Monument, still silvery in the moonlight. Her lip quivered and she pressed her father's hand. Mrs. Marsh left the balcony and went into the apartment.

"Poor Dodie," soothed her father. "But we can't help it. It's a part of the game."

"Oh, father," pleaded Dorothy, "I want to go back to Morganville and live there. I hate it all, the sham, the mean plotting and scheming, the falseness and the fraud of it. I want to live a real life, among real people, not in this miserable, artificial, intriguing place. I hate it!"

"Cheer up, dear," comforted her father. "Maybe it will all come out right."

Later in the evening, after weebegone Dorothy had gone to bed, Mrs. Marsh said to her husband:

"I cannot understand Dorothy's attitude. She does not appreciate her advantages. She is really a most fortunate girl. Not only will she be introduced into society at a most propitious time, but she is certain to meet some very desirable young men."

“Do you mean to tell me,” gasped Marsh, “that you intend to carry this social bunk of yours so far that you are deliberately planning to marry that girl off for the sake of position?”

“I am thinking of you and Dorothy,” replied Mrs. Marsh.

XXII

TOM DARLINGTON ENTERS

THE session was scheduled to end early in July. Marsh's copper shares had remained steady round nine dollars a share for a time, and then had begun to sag off from a quarter to half a point a day. There were recoveries, but at the end of a few weeks the shares were quoted at six dollars instead of nine. Marsh talked to Quicksall about prospects.

"I'm thinking of selling," said Quicksall. "There's something wrong with that deal. I haven't been able to find out just what, but I think the big interests are jockeying to get the mine. We haven't got enough of the stock to fight them and there's a good profit in it. I think we'd better take it."

Marsh had held his five thousand shares at \$45,000, and had considered himself worth that much money; but the stock kept getting lower and lower in price and a few days later he received a wire from Quicksall, reading: "Advise you to unload. I'm selling mine."

Marsh told a local broker to sell, and he received an average of a little more than five dollars

for his shares, getting in cash, when the transaction was completed, almost \$25,000.

He took the broker's check and put it in his bank. The banker greeted him cordially. "Glad to see you, Mr. Marsh," he said, "I want to have a talk with you presently on a business matter."

After Marsh left, the banker went round to the cage of the receiving teller and looked at the cheque. "Doing a little something in the market," he commented. "He's almost ripe enough to pick."

Mrs. Marsh and Dorothy went out to Morganville early in June, and Marsh followed soon after the session closed. He found himself with \$20,000 in cash and facing a fight for re-election, for the remnants of the McManus machine were determined to defeat him if they could. McManus himself was broken and discredited, but Marsh feared there might be enough of the old organisation outside the new Marsh organisation to give him trouble, and he had to look around and see where he stood. Marsh had been careful in his selection of such Federal offices as he could get, had worked assiduously for pensions and the establishment of rural-free-delivery routes, and had secured a good many, had plastered the district with documents and buried it under seeds, and was in excellent shape, so far as the bulk of his party was concerned.

He paid no attention to the law; indeed his law practice had dwindled until there was not much

of it left. He still continued with a corporation or two, and had a small retainer from the general counsel of the railroad that ran through Morganville, but that was about all. Politics engrossed him completely. He began work vigorously, strengthening his organisation and making his plans for his campaign. Carver, the new district attorney, was doing well, and the election fraud cases were progressing slowly, but helpful results were expected.

Mrs. Marsh was taking a rest cure. She denied herself to everybody, remained in her room most of the day, rarely appearing before dinner-time — she had long before changed the dinner hour in the Marsh household from noon to seven o'clock at night, much to the disgust of her servants — and had a masseuse and a nerve specialist come down from the city twice a week. Her former dressmaker solicited some of her custom, but she languidly refused to consider any Morganville artistes. Her old friends called, but were informed that she was recuperating from her arduous social duties in Washington. The local papers had a paragraph each, contributed by Mrs. Marsh, reciting her many triumphs, hinting at still greater achievements, and stating that much as Mrs. Marsh regretted it, she was compelled to remain in strict seclusion to recover her strength and fit herself for the coming season, when Miss Dorothy Marsh, who had graduated at Miss Capulet's Fashionable Seminary, was to be introduced to the most exclusive social set at the Cap-

ital. The paragraph concluded with the statement that Miss Marsh was already hailed in Washington as one of the most charming and attractive of the forthcoming buds.

Marsh had several talks with Mrs. Marsh on the subject of Dorothy. He found his wife firm in her determination to marry Dorothy to the best possible social advantage. Marsh observed with considerable satisfaction the rather frequent calls of a certain Thomas Darlington, a young civil engineer of Morganville, who had graduated at the University of Wisconsin and had a good place with the railroad. Darlington was a bright, well-bred, good-looking young chap, with stuff in him, his superiors said, and he was devoted to Dorothy. The seclusion of Mrs. Marsh worked to the advantage of Darlington, and he was careful not to be conspicuous when Mrs. Marsh was about. He contrived to get a good many afternoons off for picnics and boating excursions with the young people who lived on the hill, and on these occasions he was always Dorothy's devoted attendant.

Although Dorothy did not care for society, she quite naturally felt interested in coming out, and thought often with a good deal of pleasure of the receptions and teas and dances and other gaieties that were ahead of her. She knew she would get nowhere by protesting against her mother's plans, and so decided to have what fun she could in the coming season. At other times, when in one of her more serious moods, she would rebel at

the thought of wasting a whole winter on enjoyment, and plan vaguely to turn her life into useful channels. Then Tom would come along and take her out in his motor boat and she'd forget everything but him.

One afternoon late in August they were chugging down the river. Tom was running the engine himself. He had his coat off and his shirt-sleeves rolled up, showing a pair of muscular tanned forearms. His hat was discarded, his hair rumpled, and there was a smudge of black on one cheek. Dorothy sat comfortably in the rear of the boat, half reclining on the cushions. She wore a white dress and looked fresh and pretty.

Tom had been tinkering with his engine and had said nothing for fifteen minutes. Dorothy sat watching the sheen of the sun on the water, the green of the banks that glided smoothly by, the little waves that silvered off to ripples in the wake of the boat, the swallows that dipped into the water and shot up again, the widening circles where a fish jumped for a fly, and the lazy clouds that floated high above.

"Dorothy," said Tom, wiping his hands with a bunch of cotton waste, and trying to make his remark seem casual, "I suppose you will meet a lot of fellows down there in Washington?"

"I suppose so."

"A lot of society dudes, I reckon, that will be taking you out to dances and to shows, and sending you flowers and all that."

"I suppose so," said Dorothy again, as if the matter were one of supreme indifference to her.

"Damn them!"

"Why, Tom Darlington!" exclaimed Dorothy, sitting bolt upright and looking at her smudge-faced companion in amazement. "You mustn't talk like that!"

Tom's face grew so red that even the smudge was obscured. "I'm sorry!" he said contritely. "I didn't think. But," he added defiantly, "that's what I mean just the same."

"What have the young men in Washington done to you?" asked Dorothy, accepting the apology and setting back in the cushions.

"Nothing — yet."

"Well, then, what's the matter?"

"It isn't what they have done to me," Tom burst out passionately, "it's what I'm afraid they will do to you."

Dorothy looked serenely unconscious of the real meaning of this remark, and evinced a sudden deep interest in a white house half hidden in trees along the shore.

Tom was silent for a moment, then blurted out: "You don't care for this social game, do you, Dorothy?"

"I hate it."

"Then what are you going back to it for?"

Dorothy laughed. "Will you please inform me," she asked, "what else there is for me to do, with my father in Congress and my mother trying to be a social leader?"

"Chuck it," advised Tom, "and stay here."

"Don't be foolish, Tom. How can I?"

Tom Darlington was a young man of action. He took a quick look at his engine, which was purring along smoothly, shot a glance over the bow of the boat to see there was nothing ahead, made a wild dab at his trousers to wipe off any remaining grease that might be on his hands, and made one leap to the rear of the boat, landing skilfully beside Dorothy, who had observed his movements with wide-opened eyes.

"How can you?" he asked. "Easy enough! Stay here and marry me. I love you," he stammered. "Oh, Dorothy, I'm just crazy about you! You know I love you. You know it's real, and not like any of that bogus stuff down there in Washington. I—I—well, I just love you, that's all," he concluded lamely.

For a young woman who was receiving her first proposal Dorothy was most self-possessed. Her heart fluttered a little, but she was outwardly calm.

"Don't be foolish, Tom," she protested.

"Foolish!" he exclaimed. "What's foolish about telling the sweetest girl in all the world that I love her. Oh, Dorothy, please—please—can't you love me a little? Won't you try?"

She gave no answer. "I think you'd better look after your engine," she suggested after a pause. "It's skipping."

What Tom said about his engine need not be recorded here. But by the time he had regulated

it again he had two more smudges on his face, his arms were blackened, his shirt showed signs of the encounter, and he sulkily sat down beside the engine and steered the boat home.

"Why don't you talk?" asked Dorothy.

"I've said all I have to say," he replied, looking straight ahead.

Dorothy made no comment, but her heart beat rapidly and her eyes shone. As they came to the dock she waited until he had the boat at its moorings, and then jumping out, she said: "I must run along now, for it's about time for mother to appear." She let one small hand rest for a moment on the only clean spot on Tom's arm. "Don't you worry about those Washington men," she smiled up at him; "they're not worth it." Then she ran gracefully up the street. Two hours later Tom Darlington was still sitting where she had left him, his legs dangling over the side of the dock, dreaming the dreams of youth and love, while the motorboat rocked gently with the little waves.

XXIII

IN SIGHT OF A TOGA

THE opposition to Marsh was not effective. It was unorganised, for McManus could do nothing but hate and could not convert that hate into votes, and Senator Paxton went into the district and used his influence. Marsh had enhanced his reputation greatly by his Reciprocity speech and by his fight on McManus. He controlled the congressional convention easily, was nominated on the first ballot, and in his acceptance consecrated himself anew to the great cause of the common people.

His convention was held early in September. Even then Mrs. Marsh was preparing to go back to Washington, for she desired to take her house on October first, and it was essential that she should get everything moving smoothly before she introduced Dorothy to society. She had informed herself, and learned the proper time for that important function was the latter part of November, in order that the girl's season might be as long as possible and because the best families always brought their daughters out at that time. She did not definitely decide upon a date. That

must be held open and be subject to the dates selected for the other girls. It was true that the daughter of the president was to come out that fall, and Mrs. Marsh had another reason for getting back to Washington as soon as possible. She knew the absolute necessity of seeing the society editors and photographers and of making arrangements to have Dorothy's picture appear together with those of the most prominent *débutantes*. It took tact and much work and an expert knowledge of conditions to bring this about, and she would consider her campaign a failure if Dorothy were not presented as one of the most exclusive of all the exclusive buds to be brought out that fall.

Dorothy was a passive participant in these preparations. She had tried to manage things so she should not be left alone with Tom Darlington, but that young man had on several occasions found an opportunity to tell her again of his love for her. Although he had no satisfactory answer from Dorothy he drew considerable comfort from the memory of that time on the dock when she had touched his arm. He could close his eyes and still feel the pressure of her cool, slim fingers. He walked about as though in a dream, and was sharply reprimanded several times by the engineer under whom he was working for writing the word "Dorothy" into his specifications for culverts and small bridges. At one moment he was assuming little airs of proprietorship toward Dorothy, and the next he was torn with jealousy because she

had chanced to speak to or even look at some other young man.

Finally the day for the departure came. Mrs. Marsh had suddenly recovered her energy. She had everybody in a turmoil of arrangement and directed affairs with a masterly composure. Tom Darlington hung round. When her mother asked about him Dorothy explained he was only one of the boys of the town who wanted to say good-bye. Mrs. Marsh eyed Tom sharply and had her suspicions, but that young man maintained a most discreet demeanour when in her presence. He had planned to have another talk with Dorothy before she left and to lay his heart at her feet, and he had spent several nights thinking out what he should say to her. In the end it was Dorothy who gave him his opportunity. Half an hour before the Marshes were to start for the train, Dorothy, with an air of unconcern, made some pretext for going out into the garden, beckoning him with an almost imperceptible motion of her head, to follow her.

He found her in the little summer house. She was dressed in a grey travelling suit, and appeared perfectly composed, though her heart was beating wildly. Tom started impetuously toward her, his declaration on his lips, but when he saw her standing there so cool, so calm, his brain refused to work. He stammered, stuttered, forgot what he had to say, his face scarlet, his hands clasping and unclasping nervously.

“Dorothy,” he finally managed to get out, “I

— I — Oh, Dorothy, don't forget what you said on the dock that day."

Then he collapsed. Not another word would come. Dorothy laughed, and started up the path toward the house, and as she went she called back over her shoulder: "Don't you forget it either."

Marsh was elected easily. Enough Democrats voted for him to overcome the McManus opposition. Mrs. Marsh wrote that she was in the house, which was in a fashionable neighbourhood, near Sheridan Circle, and surrounded by the palaces of the millionaires who came to Washington to get into society. It is easier to get into Washington society if you have money than into the society of any other place whatsoever. The preparations for Dorothy's coming out were progressing. Mrs. Marsh had engaged a butler. She was ordering new gowns for herself and for Dorothy. The city was beautiful and the fashionable people were coming back.

Dorothy also wrote to her father:

"*Dear Popsie:* I am able to report much progress in the great enterprise of introducing me into society. We have a house, with an English basement and a drawing room, and a dining room that has so much Sheffield plate in it it looks like an auction store, and an English butler to go with the English basement. Mamma has had the crest of that automobile she used to hire engraved on her notepaper,

“and I spent most of my waking hours at dress-makers or milliners or shoemakers, until I feel that I am intimately acquainted with all the tradespeople in the city. Our butler is very correct and dignified, and has side whiskers. I have an idea he doesn’t quite approve of us.

“Mamma and I have joined the most fashionable church in town. She said it took much influence to get a pew in it, and she considers it a great triumph. Her pew costs two hundred dollars a year, and it is only a part of a pew at that. Of course we are not Episcopalians, and it’s an Episcopal church; but mamma says that makes no difference. It isn’t the creed that counts, she says, but the spirit in which our devotions are approached. I heard the butler tell the cook that he was glad we had decided to identify ourselves with a church that was patronised by the fashionable people. It helped him maintain his position, he said.

“My party will be the last week in November. The president’s daughter’s party is the same week. Mamma has invited her and all her friends, and she can hardly wait to know whether they will accept. She took me over to the photographer’s yesterday and I was photographed forty times. I had all my dresses there, and I dressed up and posed and then dressed up and posed again. It was very exciting. Won’t you be proud of me when you see my picture in the paper along with the president’s daughter

“and the daughter of the richest woman in Washington.”

“There was talk that the president’s daughter was ill and wouldn’t come out this fall, and mamma nearly had a fit. She even went so far as to open negotiations with Miss Capulet to have me go back to school for another term. However, the girl is well again and is coming out, so mamma has decided to let society claim me after all. It is our social duty, she says.

“Dutifully and lovingly,
“DOROTHY.”

A few days after election Senator Paxton telegraphed Marsh to come over to see him. Marsh went that night, and drove from the station out to the Paxton house.

“Jim,” said the senator, after they had shaken hands, “what are your plans?”

“Why,” Marsh replied, “I’m going to clean up out here and go back to Washington in a week or so. Mrs. Marsh has taken a house and Dorothy is to be introduced to society in a few weeks. I suppose I’ll have to help pull that off.”

“I suppose so, but that isn’t important.”

“Isn’t important?” said Marsh. “Why, my dear senator, it is the most important thing in the world, according to Mrs. Marsh.”

“Come to think it over, I suppose it is from her viewpoint,” commented Paxton. “Isn’t it amazing how hard society hits some people?”

We seem to have it harder in Washington than anywhere else, but I suppose in reality it's the same everywhere, only down in Washington the game is easier and the rewards quicker than elsewhere. I've known people to come into Washington, Jim, with not a thing in the world to recommend them save the possession of a few million dollars, or maybe only one, and build a big house, and after judicious training and coaching develop into the great social leaders of that place. I've seen them come in so raw the man didn't know whether a red tie or a blue one went with a dress-suit, and the woman unable to get into a carriage without stepping on her dress, and in three or four years become such swells it made your head ache.

"Several clever women who know the game have made good things down there coaching in the proprieties our newly rich and newly landed in Washington. I recall one man who made his money in the West. He spoke with a brogue, had hands as big as hams from working as a labourer, and ate in his shirt-sleeves and with his knife. They took him and polished him and refined him and manicured him and taught him the language, and, by George, in four brief years you'd have thought he was born to it. Only he had one great grief — they couldn't find any way to reduce the size of those hams of hands or those big feet of his, and when he got interested he lapsed back into the brogue. And they took his

wife and taught her to dance and to walk and to eat and to sleep and to bathe and to stand up and to sit down, and they enameled her, and pruned her where she needed pruning, and padded her where she needed padding, and painted her. To-day she's one of our social lights and the leader of the exclusive set. And more power to her, for she had the stuff in her or she wouldn't have been able to get it over.

"It's funny," continued Paxton, puffing at his cigar, "that we all strive constantly to prove we are better than our fellows by associating with fewer of them. What we desire is that exclusive position that enables us to look down on the rest of the world as a trifle better than they are, because we can do something they can't do, or go somewhere they can't go, or speak to somebody they can't speak to, or feed somebody they can't feed. Imagine, for example, a group of men getting together, organising themselves into a club and hiring a house, or building one, and sitting in the windows of that house and looking out at a man who passes by, and saying to themselves: 'We are better than you are, sir, because we can come in here and you can't.' And it is the same with this social game. It all is predicated on the proposition that some people can go where others can't and that's right enough, I suppose, only why in God's name should we take it so seriously, when there are big books to read, and big pictures to see, and music to hear, and the

great out-of-doors to enjoy, to say nothing of the rather pressing needs of our fellowman to attend to? But that isn't what I wanted to say."

Paxton looked keenly at Marsh, who was sitting in a big leather chair staring out of the window into the dark. "Jim," he said, "how'd you like to be senator?"

"What?" shouted Marsh, jumping up. "Say that again?"

"How'd you like to be senator?"

Marsh looked incredulously at Paxton. "Quit joking," he said.

"I'm not joking. How would you like to be senator?"

"I'd like it better than anything else on this earth, except to be president, and I don't know but I'd like it better than that. But what do you mean? Isn't Rogers going to be a candidate for re-election?"

"I understand he is."

"Then where do I come in?"

"That's what I want to talk with you about. Rogers has been in the Senate for twelve years and he hasn't made a dent. He's been regular but colourless. He voted right in the main, but he has no force and he's getting old. He wants to stay there. Every man who gets there wants to stay there, so there's nothing remarkable in that; but I have been talking it over with the boys, and they all think we need a younger man there and they all think you are that man."

Marsh grew pale and then red. He felt his

heart thumping. He was flushed, but a cold sweat broke out on his forehead. He tried to walk across the room, but his knees bent under him. Senator! James Marsh senator! It was the realisation of his fondest dream.

"But what about Rogers?"

"We've got to beat him."

"That's not so easy."

"I know it isn't. He is a good politician and he has a lot of friends. However, some things can be done as well as others. Do you want to take a chance?"

Marsh's heart urged him to say yes. His brain bade him be cautious.

"What do you mean by taking a chance?" he asked.

"Exactly what I said. If you want to get into it we will get behind you and we will beat Rogers if we can. We've got to start right now, for the legislature meets early in January. Rogers has been so sure of re-election that he hasn't made any special canvass, so we've got an even break there."

"Is it fair to Rogers? He's always been a good old sport."

"Anything's fair in politics, Jim, specially anything you can do for yourself. Will you go in or not?"

"How much will it cost?"

"Oh, I should say about twenty-five thousand dollars."

"I haven't got the money."

Paxton laughed. "Jim," he said, "do you

suppose I would ask you to go into this, knowing your financial condition as I do, if I had not provided for that end of it?"

"Where's it coming from?" asked Marsh suspiciously.

"Don't worry about that. Will you get in the game?"

Marsh walked over to the window and looked out. He saw visions of himself in the Senate, of himself making great speeches there, shaping governmental policies, taking a big part in big affairs. Senator James Marsh! His heart beat rapidly. His mind flew forward and pictured one triumph after another to him, until he saw himself in the reviewing stand in Washington, in front of the White House, on March fourth, with the bands playing Hail to the Chief, and the marchers cheering him as the president of the United States.

"Yes," he said, turning to Paxton, "I'll get in the game."

XXIV

SENATOR JAMES MARSH OR CHAINS OF GOLD

THEY talked until two o'clock in the morning, making plans and discussing ways and means. Marsh discovered this was no sudden decision on Paxton's part. That experienced person had been waiting to see if Marsh was successful at the election, and had long ago decided to put somebody else in the place of Rogers. They sent telegrams to leaders in various sections of the state, asking them to come to Paxton's house, went over the list of members of the legislature, which was heavily Republican, name by name, marking down beside each the man or the influence needed to control his vote. They gave Rogers every vote they thought he possibly might control and when they had marked these all off and had made their "doubtful" list, they found they had forty-two votes in the lower house and sixteen in the upper house that seemed sure for Marsh. This gave them fifty-six votes on joint ballot, and ninety-seven were needed. Their first need, however, was a majority vote in the caucus, and a majority of the caucus was seventy-six. Hence they needed twenty-one or two votes to make sure.

Next day the leaders came in, assented to the plan, and went over the lists, marking off some and transferring others from the "doubtful" list to the Marsh or Rogers column. Each leader was assigned a certain set of legislators and ordered to report to Senator Paxton in three days after sounding these men out. It was arranged that nothing should be printed until the following Monday, for, as Paxton said, "Monday is the day to get things over in the morning papers. Mighty little happens on Sundays and news is scarce, and we can get a bigger showing on that morning than on any other." Wherein the senator knew what he was talking about.

Marsh wrote to Mrs. Marsh he would be detained, not telling her why, for fear the news might leak out prematurely in Washington, as news frequently does. He and Paxton interviewed men, held conferences, and Paxton distributed money where it would work to an advantage, and brought every political, personal, financial and social influence he could command into battle array, ready to charge on those needed twenty or twenty-five votes as soon as the word was given. The money end of it worried Marsh. Paxton seemed to have all the funds he needed and chequed them out liberally.

"Where did this money come from?" asked Marsh one day, after he had seen Senator Paxton hand a worker ten fifty-dollar bills.

"Oh," the Senator replied in a matter-of-fact

way, "I tapped some of the boys back East for it."

"Tapped them?"

"The same. And the sap flowed freely too — the bright yellow sap."

"What boys?" insisted Marsh.

"Sonny," replied Paxton, "what you don't know won't hurt you. Suffice it to say you desire to be United States senator. Am I correct in that assumption?"

"Certainly."

"Well, there are others who may share in that desire. So let your mind rest only on that side of the matter, and arrange your affairs so you can go out and make a few speeches, and tell these good people of ours what a fine thing for them it will be for you to be their junior representative in the United States Senate."

Paxton was right. The Monday morning papers carried long stories about the candidacy of Marsh for the seat of Senator Rogers. That estimable statesman was taking his ease in New York when he heard the news, and he caught the first train for the West. The Washington papers printed dispatches telling of the plan to make Marsh senator, and giving some of the politics of it, with brief sketches of Marsh, mostly concerned with his ability as an orator. Marsh received a hysterically happy dispatch from Mrs. Marsh, who apparently considered herself a senator's wife already, and undoubtedly had

pruned her social list again on the strength of the information. A number of Marsh's colleagues wired him good wishes, and Quicksall sent him a dispatch that showed great gratification on Quicksall's part over the news.

The next few weeks were busy ones. Rogers was not without friends, by any means, and they rallied to him. Paxton and Marsh worked unceasingly, and Paxton paid out money with a prodigality that made Marsh gasp.

"Senator," Marsh said one day, "are we buying any of these votes?"

"Well," said Paxton, "I would hardly put it in as crass a manner as that. What we are doing here and there, Jim, is to persuade certain prejudiced legislators to listen to reason."

"But how?"

"By the judicious application of plasters guaranteed to improve their listening faculties."

"What kind of plasters?"

"Shinplasters, you idiot! Let's go over that list again."

A general interest was taken in the fight. Senator Rogers was an experienced politician, and there were many men in the state under political obligations to him. He put every person he could into his campaign. He and Marsh made a few speeches, and immediately after Christmas the campaign directors of both candidates moved to the state capital. The election of a senator to succeed Rogers was set for January fourth and the caucuses were to be held

the night before. The opposition newspapers charged Paxton was spending money like water, which charge did not affect Paxton in the slightest. He issued a statement saying he was spending nothing, save for legitimate publicity, and made the countercharge that it was the Rogers managers who were trying to buy votes.

He established headquarters in the political hotel, and sat all day and far into the night talking in whispers to men who came furtively in and went furtively out. He sent many telegrams, wrote reams of letters, furnished daily pabulum for the newspapers and the special correspondents, and always had his chequebook within reach. Occasionally he would hire an automobile and run out into the country to meet persons who did not want to be seen about headquarters. He was a busy man.

On the afternoon before the caucus he claimed the selection of Marsh as the candidate of his party by a majority over Rogers in the caucus of fourteen votes. The caucus selection was equivalent to the election by the legislature, for the caucus would bind every Republican legislator who went into it, and Paxton would see to it that all of them were there.

"Jim," he said to Marsh, "we've trimmed them."

"I hope I haven't been trimmed in the process," said Marsh moodily. "How much has this thing cost?"

"For Heaven's sake, cheer up!" exhorted Pax-

ton. "One would think you were being sentenced to hanging instead of being on the verge of election to the Senate."

"Maybe there isn't so much difference," replied Marsh gloomily, for he had seen much money paid out, money he knew was bribe money used for the direct buying of votes.

"Look here, Marsh," said Paxton sharply; "I'm tired of this damned nonsense. If you don't like the way this election has been brought about it isn't too late for you to quit now. I don't have to elect you, you know. I've got a majority of that caucus that would vote for a yellow dog, and maybe I'll put one up, if you don't quit grouching round here. Stop it now or I'll withdraw you and throw all my men to Rogers."

"Oh," protested Marsh alarmed, "I didn't —"

"Well, then, see that you don't. Don't let that ingrowing conscience of yours get to paining you too much or I'll send you back to Morganville by slow freight. Cut it out now. Are you going to play or not?"

Marsh hesitated. He knew it was rotten, crooked, vile. Would he declare himself no party to it? Would he allow his manhood to assert itself? Or would he submit and take the office? Those pictures of himself in the Senate, making great speeches, having a big part in big affairs flashed before him, and he could hear the bands blaring on Pennsylvania Avenue on the fourth of March.

"Certainly I'm going to play," he said.

"All right then, and forgetting this foolishness I salute you as my next colleague in the Senate."

The caucus was held. Paxton was correct in his estimate. Marsh had a majority of the fourteen and was declared the party candidate for senator. The legislature ratified the choice of the caucus, the Republicans voting for Marsh to a man. He went in and made a speech, consecrating himself to the great work of serving the people, as he had similarly consecrated himself before his congressional convention, and he worked himself into a frame of mind where he thought he meant it.

He received scores of congratulatory telegrams. Among them was one from Byron. It said: "You have opportunity and you have ability. Cut loose before it is too late."

Marsh read that telegram several times. "Cut loose!" he said to himself. "How can a man cut loose who is bound by chains of gold?"

XXV

THE DEBUT OF DOROTHY

THE Marshes were conducting their campaigns simultaneously. While Mr. Marsh was at home, seeking to be elected to the Senate, his wife was in Washington, planning just as shrewd and as careful a campaign to make her daughter's coming out a success. The date for Dorothy's introduction to society was the first strategic problem. Mrs. Marsh, as soon as she arrived in Washington in October, had set about finding out the number of *débutantes* there were to be that season. She had secured a list of about twenty, for there were other ambitious mothers who were equally well aware of the advantages that came to a bud who is introduced in the same season with the girls of the fashionable families, and all of them were making the same sort of plans Mrs. Marsh was making and scheming and contriving as ceaselessly as she.

Everything centred that season on the coming-out of the daughter of the president. Therefore, it was Mrs. Marsh's first concern to learn when that important event was to take place. She had assiduously cultivated the social secretary

at the White House, and she visited that arbitrary and powerful person, and managed to wheedle out of her the fact that the daughter of the White House would be introduced on the last Thursday in November. As soon as she obtained this information Mrs. Marsh hurried out her invitations for the Tuesday preceding that Thursday, pre-empting that date and making it doubly secure by sending announcements to the newspapers. She divided her list of *débutantes* into three parts, for she knew, of course, as every society woman knows, that even the buds are to be classified into sets — the really fashionable ones, those that are a little less important and exclusive, and finally those that are merely hangers-on, who seek to get advantage by hovering on the outskirts and getting what glory they may by coming out in a season that means much socially, both to the buds themselves and to their mothers.

Mrs. Marsh refused to admit even to herself that Dorothy came in this latter classification and worked desperately to include Dorothy in the first flight. There were seven of these, seven girls including the president's daughter, who were unquestionably of the highest social class. Twelve were of a little lower grade socially and the rest merely of the fringe. Mrs. Marsh made her classifications skilfully. She not only invited the first seven, but made sure by personal solicitation they would attend Dorothy's party. She also included the next division and a few of the fringe. She was very happy when all her accept-

ances were in and the success of the affair was assured.

Her next concern was to identify Dorothy still more conspicuously with the seven girls who were the leaders. To bring this about she manœuvred for days, visiting the women who write the society columns for the newspapers and urging them to include Dorothy's picture in the group that should present to the public the pictures of these most important girls. She had helped these women in every way with news and gossip and knew them well. She paid particular attention to the women who do the society news for the fashionable illustrated weeklies, and by a process of cajoling, flattering, combined with judicious influence properly applied, she made sure that the picture of Miss Dorothy Marsh, daughter of the Honourable John Marsh, of the House of Representatives and potential senator, would be in that group. She began this early, for the picture layouts — which is the technical term — for the weeklies had to be made up some time before the publication in order to be printed about the time of the parties. Mrs. Marsh devoted all her efforts to this essential feature of her campaign and was successful. She was assured that the picture of Dorothy would be presented to the awed public in the same group that showed the president's daughter in her pretty frock, and spent hours and hours at the photograph gallery with Dorothy, aiming to get just the right picture in just the most attractive pose

for this purpose. Nor was her task ended then, for she must keep constant watch lest some other ambitious mother should depose Dorothy and push her own daughter into this indispensable company.

She was not an extravagant woman, in the sense of wasting money, but she decided to stop at no expense for this display and had laid the facts fully before her husband. He had good-naturedly told her to do what was necessary, and had provided her with twenty-five hundred dollars for house account and for her campaign, in addition to paying the first monthly instalment of the rent. Mrs. Marsh economised everywhere except in the matter of the coming-out party. She and Dorothy lived plainly. She scrimped the servants, did without many things that would have added to her comfort, and saved in every possible way, but she was prodigal when it came to the introduction of Dorothy. She knew she could make a showing with an afternoon function, a reception from five to seven, say, with the other buds there and plenty of flowers and food and music, but she decided she must rivet Dorothy's position and her own. After much thought she planned a reception, a small dinner and a dance. This would enable her to ask to the reception all those whom she could by any possibility ask and who might add some distinction to the affair, and to make up an extremely select party for the dinner. About fifty of the most desirable ones

were invited to the dance. She flooded society with the invitations for the reception, sending out fully five hundred cards.

As soon as the news came that Marsh was a candidate for the senatorship and had a fair chance of election, the acceptances increased in number and in importance. The mothers who had hesitated about accepting for their daughters suddenly decided it might be well to do so, and by the second week in November Mrs. Marsh was in ecstasies of delight, for all the really fashionable débutantes were to be there, and Dorothy had been invited to every one of their parties, including that of the president's daughter.

The buds began coming out early in November. Dorothy went careering from one party to another, attending luncheons and dinners and dances. She was full of life and spirits and enjoyed herself thoroughly, although she was so well informed as to the plots and plans and intrigues of the scheming mothers behind these girls that she often wondered that she did. Mrs. Marsh guarded her carefully and kept her in bed on days when there were no parties, a regimen against which Dorothy protested but which Mrs. Marsh inexorably enforced.

Then came the great day, the Tuesday before the last Thursday in November. The newspapers had been full of the arrangements for the début of the president's daughter, but Mrs. Marsh had seen to it that there was adequate mention of her own function. On the Sunday be-

fore these parties the newspapers had printed the group picture of the most important buds, and the charming face of Miss Dorothy Marsh was in each one. The illustrated weeklies came along, and there was Dorothy's picture close to the picture of the president's daughter and the daughters of the other big families. Mrs. Marsh cried a little when she saw these pictures and read the flattering text that referred to Miss Dorothy as "one of the most charming of the season's array, of buds from official and residential society in Washington." Likewise she sent all the clippings, showing the pictures, to her husband, with a letter telling in detail just what this meant to them all, and pointing out that it meant more to him than to any one, inasmuch as this establishment of their social position would undoubtedly aid him in securing further honours at the Capital and elsewhere.

Mrs. Marsh had been careful to include in her invitation lists a number of the most available of the under secretaries and attachés of the embassies, and as it was known that the president's daughter was to be at Dorothy's party, most of these gilded young gentlemen accepted, thus insuring an imposing list of "among those present" for the newspapers next day. She had set her hours from five to seven instead of from four to seven, as was the custom, thereby gaining in fashionable esteem, and she had filled the house with flowers, had engaged the best caterer in the city for the refreshments, and had secured an

orchestra that was to play behind a bank of palms.

At five o'clock Mrs. Marsh, regal in a new gown of yellow satin, took her stand in the drawing room with Dorothy beside her. Dorothy's gown looked simple, but it really was a most expensive affair, and had been the cause of many tears on the part of the dressmaker and much concern on the part of Mrs. Marsh. The butler, dignified as a chief justice, was at the entrance. Everything was in readiness for the great social triumph of the Marsh family.

The other buds arrived early and made an attractive group in the drawing room. Then the guests began dropping in in twos and threes, and presently the street outside the Marsh house was jammed with automobiles and carriages and the drawing room was crowded. As the guests entered the butler announced them. They greeted Mrs. Marsh and were presented in turn by Mrs. Marsh to Dorothy. The crush was greatest at six o'clock. There were few of the older men present, although some husbands came with their fashionable wives, but the young men were in force, under secretaries from the European embassies, a few of the most desirable of the young Latin-Americans, young army and navy officers, sons of senators, and some of the sons of the residential families. Mrs. Marsh was radiant. She knew exactly what to do, regretted the sad fact that the political duties of her husband kept him away, received her congratulations with becoming

modesty, smiled complacently when they told her about the superlative beauty and social graces of her daughter, and was a most admirable as well as a most fashionable hostess. The dinner that night was a triumph, and the dance, which lasted until midnight, was most enjoyable. After the last guest had left, Mrs. Marsh, standing with Dorothy in the drawing room, that looked dismally empty despite its abundance of decorations, threw her arms about her daughter.

"We have arrived at last!" she cried. "After all these years of struggle and work and planning we have arrived. I am so happy! It has been a hard fight, but it is worth it. Do you appreciate what this means to you and to me, Dorothy? They were all there — the best people in Washington, the most exclusive families, the highest officials."

"Not exactly all, mamma," protested Dorothy. "A few were missing."

"I think, my dear," said Mrs. Marsh a little coldly, "that if you scan the lists in the society news in the morning, you will discover there will be as many fashionable names in those mentioned as present to-day as have occurred in any débütante list this season."

Dorothy laughed. "It seems to me," she said, "the only reason I was introduced to society was to have a list of those present printed in the papers."

Mrs. Marsh shrugged her shoulders. "I have

often wondered," she said, "if you fully realise your position and your opportunities."

"Perhaps not," said Dorothy. "But I know you've worked very hard for me, mother dear, and I really am grateful." Long after her daughter had kissed her good-night Mrs. Marsh was still sitting in the big drawing room, dreaming happy dreams of social triumphs yet to come.

She had her plans made. In any event she would give a dinner, a most exclusive dinner, and have a singer or a musician from New York to entertain her guests. Or perhaps she might have a reception with a singer of note, and if her husband should be elected to the Senate she intended to give a series of four morning musicales, to which she would invite the most exclusive women in Washington. She sorted out in her mind the four gradations of guests, taking those of least account for the first musicale, and having the least expensive artist for that one, and so on until the fourth, when she would have only the most exclusive women and a great musician. She could picture already the notices that would appear in the papers.

She also resolved to urge her husband to further efforts in money making. She had heard stories of how this man had a retainer from such a corporation — for purely legal services, of course — and how that one was making worlds of money in the stock market, and she decided her husband must exert himself, for she knew the social campaign she had planned would be expen-

sive. It was imperative, though, for she must press the advantage she had already secured. She fancied herself a senator's wife, and her mind ran far ahead and she, too, had visions of the White House, with herself as First Lady of the Land. And it was all in her husband's interest. James must see that and provide the money. She was unselfishly giving up her life to advance him, and he must do his part.

The butler tentatively turned off a light at this point, and Mrs. Marsh roused herself and went to her room, to lay awake for hours planning new social triumphs for Dorothy and herself, looking ahead to the day when Dorothy should marry a man who would help them both with fortune and with position toward the goal.

XXVI

SANTA CLAUS ARRIVES

MARSH ran down to Washington for a day or two at Christmas, and found Dorothy and Mrs. Marsh engaged in a round of social pleasures. Dorothy was invited to the numerous luncheons, theatre parties, dances and teas given for the buds, and Mrs. Marsh had a tea and a theatre party for Dorothy. Marsh hurried back to the state capital, and returned to Washington immediately after his election to the Senate. Mrs. Marsh unfolded her social plans to him. She told him of the dinners she intended to give and explained her plan for a series of four musical mornings.

"Gee, Molly," he exclaimed, "that will take a lot of money!"

"Yes," she replied, "it will cost something; not as much as you may think, but something."

"You know our living expenses are horribly increased with this house and all the rest of it," ventured Marsh.

"I am fully aware of all that too," she said; "but if you will stop to consider the advantages we have obtained, the manner in which Dorothy has been established — why, James, she is invited

everywhere and so am I — you will see that it is worth whatever it may cost.”

“Molly,” asked Marsh, “just what do you figure it is worth to us?”

“It goes far beyond mere money value,” Mrs. Marsh explained eagerly. “It has established Dorothy and me in the most select society of this city. It will give us the entrée to the houses of the ambassadors, to the cabinet homes, and will get us recognition at the White House. Surely you must see what that will mean to you.”

“I know, I know,” soothed Marsh; “but I am not a rich man, Molly.”

“Why are you not a rich man?” she flared. “Other men with not half your ability or your prominence get rich in Washington. You have friends in New York. You made money in that copper stock. Why can’t you make more? Surely you owe some consideration to Dorothy and myself, who have worked so hard to help you.”

“You don’t want me to be dishonest, do you?”

“Dishonest? No, but who says Senator Fersinger is dishonest, or Senator Pywell? Who says Representative Danton is dishonest, or Representative Alton? They have made money here; yet they are not called dishonest. They take advantage of their opportunities. So might you if you only would.”

Marsh walked away. Fersinger, he knew, had a big retainer from a great corporation; Pywell represented certain railroads; Danton was re-

ported to be close to Wall Street, and so on. He felt there was some reason in his wife's viewpoint. These men were held in high regard. Nobody called them dishonest, nor did they consider themselves so. They were simply playing the game and utilising their opportunities. Why shouldn't he?

He was warmly congratulated on his election to the Senate. The organisation leaders in the House made much of him, although they mourned his loss, they said. He was invited twice to dinners given by the Senate leader, and Senator Paxton gave a great dinner in his honour at the big hotel, where there were a hundred and fifty guests, and where all the speakers referred to him in the most complimentary terms and predicted a great future for him. Before the end of the short session of Congress Marsh felt himself to be a great man.

Mrs. Marsh was drawing rather heavily on him and he was nearly at the end of his resources, when one night early in February Rambo telephoned to him at his house that he was coming up to see him.

Rambo plunged at once into the subject that concerned him. "Marsh," he said, "I have got a chance to make a pot of money."

"Well?" said Marsh, displaying interest.

"A pot of money, I say, and I come to you because you can do more with what I have than I can. Do you want to go in?"

"How can I tell until I hear more about it?" asked Marsh.

"Jim," said Rambo, glancing around the room and lowering his voice to a whisper, "I can get an advance copy of the decision of the Supreme Court in the Alta Continental Case."

"What of it?"

"What of it?" sneered Rambo, looking at Marsh in undisguised contempt. "Nothing of it, except that the stockmarket will break, crumble on that decision, and if we know it in advance we can clean up a lot of coin."

"I haven't any money to buy stock with," said Marsh.

"You haven't any money to buy stock with," mimicked Rambo. "Well, neither have I got any money I am going to buy stock with. For Heaven's sake, wake up! Don't you see what I mean? You may not have money to buy stock with, but you know men who have got money to buy stocks with. Get them to buy the stock."

"Where do we come in?"

Rambo threw his arms in the air and stamped about the room. "Great God," he shouted, "are you such an infant that you don't know where we come in? We come in because for the information we will have they will carry a certain number of shares of stock for us and we'll get the profit without risk."

"Will they do it?"

"Will they do it? Of course they will do it."

If they don't, they won't get the information. It's a big deal, and they will be glad enough to split for the information."

"But why do you tell me about it?" asked Marsh suspiciously.

Rambo sat down and lighted a cigar. "The reason I tell you about it," he said slowly, "is because you have connections over there that will operate on a bigger scale than any of mine, especially as you are now a senator-elect."

"What do you mean?"

"Quicksall, you idiot! Quicksall! You know him and you know he represents a big combination over there. He'll take a chance. That's his business. And we've got to work quickly too. This is Tuesday, and the decision is coming down next Monday."

"Where did you get the decision?" asked Marsh.

"Never mind where I got it. I'll prove that it's genuine all right when the time comes. It will cost five thousand dollars and a few shares of stock carried. Will you go in?"

Marsh was intensely interested. He needed the money. He had heard rumours of the profit derived from a foreknowledge not only of court decisions, but also of congressional action, especially in tariff matters, and he pressed Rambo for further details.

"Oh, it's all right," said Rambo. "If you will give your word I'll tell you how we can get it."

Marsh promised.

"A stenographer will leak," said Rambo, and would go no further. "Are you in?"

Marsh hesitated. "Hurry up," urged Rambo. "We've got to get action right away. If you are in get Quicksall on the telephone at his house or his club and tell him to take the midnight train."

Marsh fiddled with his watchcharm and puffed nervously at his cigar.

"Oh, hell!" said Rambo, "come on. There's no danger. Nobody will know anything about it. Here, where's your telephone?"

He went to the telephone and said to the operator: "Give me the toll board, please. Hello, toll, this is — Marsh, what's your number — this is North 16766. I want George F. Quicksall, who lives not far from Fifth Avenue on East Seventy-third Street, New York. You can find his number in the book. If he isn't there try the Metropolitan Club. Call me, and please hurry the connection as much as you can."

Marsh several times started to protest, but each time he refrained. It seemed safe. It was legitimate enough, so far as he was concerned, for he had no dealings with the stenographer. He calmed his conscience with the thought that he was no briber. He was merely utilising information that came to him from a friend. It was a flimsy pretext, but he saw visions of immediate cash.

"When we get Quicksall," said Rambo, "tell him to come over on the midnight train; that it's

very important; and he'll come all right. 'And Marsh,' Rambo continued, his face hardening, "you've got to make this deal a good one. Don't let Quicksall put anything over on you. He's a trader and is always looking for the best of it. He'll want to let you down with five hundred or a thousand shares. That won't do. Make him carry us for two thousand shares apiece and put up the five thousand dollars, or there's nothing doing. If he won't come across we'll try Tipton, of the other big bunch over there. Tell him that. Don't let him con you."

The telephone bell jangled. "All ready with New York," said the long-distance operator.

Quicksall was on the telephone. Marsh talked.

"Hello, Quicksall. This is Marsh — yes, Senator Marsh — or it will be pretty soon. Thank you. I have a very important matter I want to talk to you about. No, that won't do; can't you take the midnight train to-night? It's very important. All right. Come out to my house for breakfast — I'll expect you about eight o'clock. The train gets in at seven-thirty. Thanks. Good-bye."

Marsh turned to Rambo. "You're sure it's safe?" he asked a bit tremulously.

"Sure, it's safe. No one on earth will know anything about it. You make the deal and telephone me and we'll both meet Quicksall at noon and I'll give him the notes of the decision. It's a corker! There will be something doing in Alta

Continental all right when Wall Street gets it. We've got to work fast for this damned stenographer may peddle this decision to somebody else. There's no honour among that kind of cattle. If it gets out before Monday the stuff will begin to break before that."

Quicksall came up to Marsh's house for breakfast. Marsh told him what he had, or what he could get rather. Quicksall was greatly interested.

"Sure it's straight?" asked Quicksall.

"It's the stenographer's final notes of the decision."

"What's the trend of it?" asked Quicksall innocently.

"Can't say," fenced Marsh. "I haven't seen it yet."

"Then how do you know it's genuine?"

"Oh, I know it's all right. Don't worry about that."

"Well," said Quicksall, "what do you want me to do?"

"Carry some stock for myself and my associates in the deal you make."

"All right," said Quicksall, as if it was all settled; "I'll put you in for a thousand shares."

"A thousand?"

"Yes, I'll carry you for a thousand shares, if it looks as good after I get it as you say it is."

"Quicksall," said Marsh, his heart thumping but his voice steady, "I'm afraid we can't do any business."

"Why not?" asked Quicksall sharply.

"Because my associates won't give up this information for so small a price."

"A thousand shares of stock is a lot of stock," commented Quicksall, eying Marsh narrowly; "but I don't want to be a tight-wad in this affair. Suppose we say fifteen hundred?"

"Not enough," Marsh tried to be very businesslike, but he felt his voice trembling.

"Not enough?" exclaimed Quicksall. "How much do you wolves want then?"

"Four thousand shares."

"Holy Moses!" shouted Quicksall. "Do you think we've got all the money in the world?"

"Maybe not," said Marsh, "but this deal is big enough to entitle us to four thousand shares of stock in it."

"Look here, Marsh," said Quicksall, "I've always done the fair thing by you. What's the use of laying down on me this way? We've got to take the risk and put up the money. Make it three thousand."

Marsh had gained courage by this time. He saw Quicksall was most anxious to get the information, and he was sorry he had not set his figure at five thousand shares.

"Four thousand shares or nothing," he insisted.

"All right," assented Quicksall, "where's your dope?" They telephoned to Rambo, who met them at one of the hotels. Quicksall smiled

when he saw Rambo. "Pressing things a little, ain't you, Rambo?" he asked.

"Oh," and Rambo grinned as he said it, "everything is fair in high finance, Quicksall."

The deal was arranged. Quicksall gave his word he would carry four thousand shares of stock and received the notes of the decision. He caught the Congressional Limited to New York at four o'clock and Marsh and Rambo awaited events. In order to help along, Rambo gave out a story to some friends of his, who had wire connections with Wall Street, that the long-expected decision in the Alta Continental Case, which would probably be handed down on Monday, was favourable to the contention of the corporation. This held the stock steady in New York for a day or so, while Quicksall made his arrangements to sell a great many thousand shares at the proper time, for the stock was sure to break.

Monday came and the small courtroom of the Supreme Court was crowded, for the vital decision was expected. The alert reporters who flashed the decisions to New York were standing near the door. Their familiarity with the methods and manners of the court was so great, and their knowledge of the cases so intimate, they could tell the general trend of a decision after hearing a few hundred words of it. The best of them kept a card index on every important case, containing the main points of the various contentions, summarised, and as soon as the drift of the opinion became apparent they were able to write

a bulletin for the New York wires that would get to Wall Street instantly, as wires were kept open for that purpose on decision days.

A few important decisions were announced and then one of the justices began to read the decision in the *Alta Continental Case*. Before he had read five minutes the expert reporters knew the decision was adverse to the *Alta Continental* contention, and they flashed the first bulletin; "Scotus" — Scotus is the telegraphic code word for Supreme Court of the United States — "decides adversely *Alta Continental*," and supplemented that information with other bulletins giving the details of the decision. The stock broke heavily, selling off ten dollars a share almost instantly, then coming back and then going down, until the total loss of the day was a fraction over eleven dollars before the financial powers could get their support in.

Quicksall's brokers were prepared. They executed their orders, covered at an average of ten dollars profit, and Quicksall wired Marsh: "Santa Claus arrived on schedule time."

A day or two later Marsh received a cheque for \$39,500, which was the \$40,000 profit on the deal less the broker's commissions. He put this cheque in his bank and gave a cheque to Rambo for half of it. Mrs. Marsh was delighted. Marsh did not tell her the details of his transaction, but he told her he had made fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars, and she planned another reception with a grand-opera star from New York as the added attraction.

XXVII

A SUITABLE ALLIANCE

DOROTHY received many letters from Tom Darlington; each protesting undying affection, and had written him several non-committal replies devoted mostly to her social adventures. After he had received one of these, Tom was downcast and gloomy for days. He still looked on the whole of Washington society with suspicion and held to his belief that Dorothy would be snatched from him by some young man down there.

The fact was Dorothy met many young men and, as she was an attractive girl, had her share of attention, but she danced as gaily and flirted as harmlessly with one as with another. Mrs. Marsh still had her four desirables in mind, and she saw to it they were included in all her lists, while she urged Dorothy to attend every function where any one or all of them might be. She had not positively decided on which one she would make her son-in-law, but her preferences were centred on a young man, the son of the very rich Senator Wheeldon, from an Eastern state, who was devoting himself to society and the usual diversions of rich young men in Washing-

ton, and who had not a thought of marrying Dorothy or any one else.

One afternoon Dorothy met Mrs. Lyster at a reception.

"Sit down, my dear," said that sprightly lady, "and have a chat with me. How are you coming along in society?"

"Oh," replied Dorothy, "famously, I should suppose, if going everywhere means getting along in society."

"Indeed it does," said Mrs. Lyster, "and that is all it means. Society, as we indulge in it here, consists of going to functions given by other people, which bore you, in order that other people will come to your functions, which bore them. We work at it as hard as we should work at making dresses if we were seamstresses, and without the reward of something accomplished the seamstress has. We struggle to have people who consider themselves more exclusive than we are let down the bars for us, fight desperately to get within the sacrosanct inclosure, and once we are in we immediately put up the bars against all others who may be making the same fight we are. We increase our own importance by arrogating to ourselves the importance of others, as soon as we feel the others and more important have acknowledged us at a portion of their own estimates of themselves. Then we press on and on, and every time we can attach ourselves to some one higher up than we are we push down those who are below us and reach out for those above us. It's

an endless struggle, a continual battle to get distinction from association with those who seem to be distinguished and to keep others from using us for the very same purposes.

“ I don’t suppose you see the humour of it yet, but you will in time. I go to dinner after dinner and meet almost the same people. Once in a while there is a new one, somebody who has fought her way in and has brought her self-conscious husband with her. They are all the same, served by the same caterer with the same menus. Why, do you know, I am so accustomed to seeing the waiters at these dinners that I have to restrain myself lest I should shake hands with them as old friends and ask after the children. We talk of the same things. I know perfectly well that if I were to be transported to some other clime for ten years, and then should be brought back again, I would hear the women I would meet, and the men too, talking about exactly the same things they were talking about when I went away, and sharing their infinitesimal ideas about society without a change of expression even.

“ Of course it isn’t all so, for there are scores of cultured women in this city who have a wide and varied range of information, and who can talk interestingly on interesting topics, women who are not fashionable in the society sense of that much misused word, but who have charming, cultured homes, who are quick to seize the great advantages that come to any woman who lives in Washington, and who know and understand the

affairs of the day that centre here. There are women whom it is a delight to know, who give dinners and receptions where you meet real men and real women, but these are not the ones whose doings are chronicled through efforts of their own so constantly in the newspapers, and whose highest ambition is to outshine a neighbour or a friend — save the mark — by snaring for her house some more distinguished person or some more exclusive woman than her friend can obtain. We lift ourselves by hanging to the coattails and the trains of those who are just above us. And when we get to the top, when we are the ones for whose favour all the underlings are striving, how quickly we forget our own strivings and how vastly exclusive we become.”

Mrs. Lyster stopped and sipped her tea. “I hope you don’t mind the maunderings of an old lady who means well,” she said.

“It’s very interesting, provided it isn’t personal, and ” — she smiled at Mrs. Lyster — “of course it isn’t personal.”

“Oh, certainly not,” that lady hastened to say. “It’s entirely general, I assure you. But in a broad way, you know, every climber is like every other climber. They all prefer a nod from a higher-up to a gift from a lower-down, however meritorious a lower-down may be; but when a climber gets at or near the top she straightway forgets her own woes and disappointments and anguish and discouragements, and instead of being sympathetic with those who are treading the

weary path she has trod, she becomes cold as ice and puts every possible barrier in the way of those poor souls. In other words, after working until she is on the verge of nervous prostration and plotting and scheming and intriguing to get into the exclusive set, regardless of whether those already in want her or not, which nine times out of ten they do not, she instantly forgets her own trials and stands shoulder to shoulder with her new-found social compatriots to keep everybody else out. Oh, my dear, it is a heartbreaking system, and so useless — for the mere drudgery and detail and mustness of continual attention to it so exhausts a woman she has nothing to give that can benefit anybody, nor have those with whom she mingles anything to give her, and neither could receive even if the others had all the knowledge of the ages at their control.

“But I’m too serious! How are you getting on with the younger diplomatists?”

“Well enough,” said Dorothy, thinking of Tom Darlington’s passionate protests against getting on with them at all.

“I don’t see how we could manage without them, the dear, useful chaps,” continued Mrs. Lyster. “If we did not have the younger diplomatists to fall back on we never should have any men at our affairs. But those gallant lads are always ready. They will come to teas and to dinners, and if one is wise one always knows where to find one of them to fill in when a guest has failed one. Besides, even if they do not come

they always get cards and are entirely too gentlemanly to say anything when they find themselves reported in the newspapers as having been here and there, giving tone by their titles or their positions to functions they never attended at all, but for which they had cards, of course.

“One of them told me all the clothes he needed were an afternoon suit, an evening suit and a suit of pyjamas, for he never went out until it was time to go to a tea and he always had invitations to dinner. In this way he had no expense beyond his room rent; but he said he did wish it would come to be the custom to serve bacon and eggs instead of pale punch and small cakes at afternoon affairs, for he was very tired of breakfasting on that sort of stuff and he drank so much tea it positively was making him nervous.

“And, by the way, my dear, I hope you have selected your hairdresser and your manicure and your masseuse with discretion. You cannot imagine of what inestimable benefit these creatures are if you get the right ones. Be sure and engage only those who go to the houses of the social leaders, for in this way you are able to keep track of affairs nicely. After they once get to know you these people are invaluable for purposes of information. They see everything and hear everything and they are delightful gossips. I have learned of many a social stratagem while my hair was being treated or my body massaged. Of course they talk about your affairs to others, but one must take that chance; and then, you know,

one always thinks herself impeccable, and that is comforting."

A stately woman swept through the room, elaborately dressed. She was about half as youthful as her clothes. "Positively she gets younger, as to toilettes at least, every day. And she holds her own physically too."

Mrs. Lyster smiled at Dorothy. "Let me tell you something," she said. "The secret of longevity is to be well-to-do or a rich widow. Such people never die. This city is filled with rich widows who have discovered the life eternal. Years and years ago father, after making his pile and unmaking himself in the process, died and left the results of all his struggles and his scheming and contriving to mother, including a very welcome portion of life insurance. Mother, well provided for, has nothing on earth to do but live, and she lives on and on and on. There are scores of others like her, whom I have known for twenty years, and they are just as lively and just as far from dissolution as they were when I first encountered them. They have nothing to do but to take care of themselves, and they have that down to a science. They eat sparingly, sleep well and have no worries. That's the prescription, Miss Dorothy, for a long, long life. Get married, get a husband who can and will be appreciative in his will, weep decorously when his efforts to pile up money for you cut him off in the flower of his youth, and then live happily forever after. But I must be going. Don't mind my

nonsense, my dear. I have to talk something besides the usual piffle at times or explode, and this time I selected you for my victim. Good-bye. Come in and see me when you get an opportunity."

She moved away, laughing, and Dorothy went back home and there found another letter from Tom Darlington. It was a long letter, and it said explicitly and passionately, that unless a certain divinity, by name Dorothy Marsh, took pity on the frightful state of mind and heart of one Thomas Darlington, said young man would not hold himself responsible for what might ensue. One of the consequences, it was darkly hinted, might be a visit to Washington and the seizure of the young lady in question, or it might be the deprivation to the world of a rising young civil engineer, who had no idea that life was worth living without some sign from Miss Marsh that she entertained for him somewhat more interest and sentiment than were expressed in her communications.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Marsh that evening, "I observe a good many letters from Morganville, apparently from the same person."

"Do you, mother?" asked Dorothy in great surprise.

"I do, and I should like to inquire who is writing to you so frequently."

"Oh," said Dorothy lightly, "Tom Darlington sends me gossip letters about the happenings out there."

"Tom Darlington?"

"Yes, mother. You remember Tom Darlington, of course?"

"Some kind of a railroad employé, isn't he — a fireman or a brakeman or something like that."

"He's a civil engineer and he has a great future," retorted Dorothy indignantly. Instantly she regretted what she had said, for Mrs. Marsh raised her eyebrows, and smiled a little cold smile that warned Dorothy that something unpleasant was coming.

"Indeed!" she said, and there was a world of meaning in the word.

Dorothy was silent. She felt herself blushing and she was annoyed at her mother's tone.

"I trust you are not so foolish as to think seriously of this young man," Mrs. Marsh continued.

"Why, mother!" Dorothy protested warmly. "What an idea! Tom is no more to me than — than — well, than any one else," she concluded lamely.

"He must be nothing to you, Dorothy. Up to the present I have not spoken to you of your future; but the time has come when I must speak plainly. It is your duty to yourself, to me and to your father to ally yourself with one of the best families in this city. Our future is here. Your father is to be a senator, and he doubtless will continue in the Senate until he is called to greater responsibilities. In a year or two you must marry. When you do, you must carefully select your husband from your own rank in life,

with a view to your own advancement and further social progress."

"But, mother, that wasn't the reason you married father!"

"The cases are not parallel," Mrs. Marsh replied stiffly. "I was a country girl and had no social knowledge. You are a recognised member of good society here in Washington. You must maintain your position or exalt it by marriage, and not lower it by a foolish alliance."

Dorothy had expected and dreaded this interview. Her mother's efforts to place her in conjunction with the senator's son, young Wheeldon, were so apparent that she knew he was the man Mrs. Marsh had chosen for her. She didn't want to marry yet, and she especially did not want to marry young Wheeldon.

"What do you mean, mother?" she asked.

"I mean that there are several admirable and available young men here, any one of whom would be a suitable husband for you. I would look with favour, for instance, on an alliance between you and Mr. Wheeldon, whose family is one of the most exclusive in official society and who is rich and in every way fitted to be your husband."

"But I don't want to marry Mr. Wheeldon and he doesn't want to marry me."

Mrs. Marsh smiled her cold smile again. "That is a matter of no importance," she said. "If you do your part I will do mine, and the marriage can be arranged."

Dorothy's face paled and then reddened. Her

heart beat wildly. "Oh, mother, how can you, how can you!" she cried and bursting into tears she ran from the room.

That night she talked to her father. "Popsie," she said, "mother insists on marrying me off to Wilbur Wheeldon."

"What does he say about it?" asked Marsh.

"I don't suppose he knows it — yet."

"And what do you think about it?"

"I hate it."

"Well, it may be that if the two high contracting parties are in a state of complete ignorance on the one hand, and indignant protest on the other, the third high contracting party, your mother, can be circumvented."

"Oh," cried Dorothy, throwing her arms round his neck, "will you tell mother not to do it?"

"No," replied Marsh, smiling, "I shall not promise to do exactly that, but I'll try in other ways to help prevent it. Only you mustn't tell. Promise now."

"I promise," said Dorothy, and she kissed him again.

Two days later Tom Darlington received a letter from Miss Marsh in which he discerned some slight evidences of interest on the part of the writer in himself and his career, and his world became rosy with hope.

XXVIII

A LEGAL RETAINER

THERE was to be a special session of the new Congress to convene on March fifteenth to revise the tariff. This meant that Marsh, after he finished his congressional duties in the Congress that ended on March fourth, would be sworn in as senator for the special session and move over to the other end of the Capitol. He was busy on the District of Columbia Committee, on which he had moved up to fourth place from the top on the majority side, and was working hard.

About two weeks before the end of the session he met his banker at a dinner. "Mr. Marsh," said the banker, "I wish you would drop in to see me in the morning, if you can conveniently."

Marsh went. The banker received him cordially and took him into the private office. They chatted for a moment about the special session, the tariff and other legislative matters, and then the banker said: "You are still on the District of Columbia Committee, are you not?"

"Yes."

"I wonder if you have had occasion to look into the merits of those several street extensions that are projected."

"I have," replied Marsh.

"You favour them, I trust?"

"No," Marsh replied, "I do not. It seems to me these particular extensions are unnecessary and merely proposed to benefit real estate in this vicinity — a job, in short."

"Oh, Mr. Marsh," protested the banker, "I assure you the extensions are demanded by the growth of the city. I had hoped you would favour them."

"I shall require more proof of the necessity for them before I vote for them," said Marsh.

"Indeed," and the banker's face hardened. He reached into a drawer in his desk, took out a paper and said, tapping with the paper on the edge of the desk to emphasise his words: "It is possible I can give you that proof."

"I shall be glad to consider it."

The banker handed him the paper. It was a single sheet containing a list of names. It was headed "Shareholders in the Atlas Land Company."

Marsh felt the paper tremble a little as he read it. His own name was fourth on the list, and he was credited with owning one hundred shares. He saw on the paper the names of Paxton and various other influential men in the House and Senate, saw those names through a sort of a blur.

"What has this to do with those street extensions?" he asked.

"Why, Mr. Marsh," said the banker suavely,

"it has everything to do with it. The lands owned by the Atlas Company are to be benefited."

"Then—" and Marsh gained control of himself by a strong effort—"of course I cannot vote for it."

The banker smiled that smile that only embraced his lips. His eyes were cold and hard.

"I am sorry to hear you say that," he said. "I had hoped you would see your way clear to vote for it. You befriended the street-car extension into that section, you recall."

"But the Atlas Company wasn't interested then, Paxton told me."

"Not directly, perhaps, but sufficiently, I imagine, to make that vote of yours difficult of explanation if the matter should become public."

"Are you trying to threaten me?" Marsh demanded hotly.

"Not at all, my dear sir, not at all. Who am I that I should try to threaten an influential member of the House of Representatives and a senator-elect? Not at all. I merely desire to call these facts to your attention. By the way, I took the liberty of having our bookkeeper make up a statement of your account for you. You have not sent in your book in some time. I observe some heavy deposits now and then."

Marsh jumped from his chair. "What do you mean?" he asked hoarsely. "What do you mean?"

"Nothing." The banker was calm and courteous. "I thought you might like the informa-

tion. We plan to have the books of our customers balanced every three months and yours has not been in for a year. That is all, I assure you."

Marsh was red with rage, but said nothing. There didn't seem to be anything for him to say.

"And," continued the banker, "while the banker's relation to his client is most confidential and sacred, at the same time that very relation intrusts him necessarily with a full knowledge of such transactions and cheques as may pass through his bank. You appreciate that, of course?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, Mr. Marsh, I am informed as to the resources of your revenue. I do not desire to be harsh with you, but I am informed also, as you know, of the great benefit that will accrue to you by these street extensions. I am interested in these. It is not necessary for you to vote for them. Their passage has been arranged, both through the committee and the Congress. The matter comes up in committee to-morrow morning for final action. I trust you may be delayed and not be able to attend the committee meeting. That is all. Isn't the weather remarkable for this time of year? Not going, are you? Well, good-morning."

Marsh walked out in a daze. He took a turn round the White House ellipse to think it out. The banker, of course, knew where his outside money had been obtained and how. He knew that miserable mistake of the Atlas Land Company. Marsh did not for a moment think the

banker would expose him, for that would mean the banker's exposure and the exposure of others high up in Congress; but he felt he was in a way in the power of the banker. It would be fatal if one of the opposition newspapers, for example, should get wind of his transactions, small as they were. It would ruin him as a senator. Anyhow it was an affair of little importance. The street extensions undoubtedly were needed. Washington was growing rapidly and in that direction. He had been amazed, last time he drove out that way, to see the rows and rows of new houses that were going up. Perhaps he had not taken a broad view of the necessity for the extensions. He would think it over carefully.

He thought it over with such decided results that he didn't go to the committee meeting and the extensions were recommended without protest. Instead of going to the meeting he went to see Senator Paxton.

"Howdy, senator," said Paxton, as he entered the room. Marsh thrilled with pleasure at the salutation. The title of senator was yet so new to him that every time he heard it coupled with his own name he straightened up and threw out his chest.

Marsh jumped right into the matter he had in mind. "Say," he said, "that banker of ours took a fall out of me yesterday."

"What did he do? Call a loan?"

"No, but he intimated pretty plainly if I

didn't do certain things he might make trouble for me."

"Oh, indeed," said Paxton, looking much surprised. "Not really?"

"Exactly that. He wanted me to stay away from the District Committee and not oppose some street extensions."

"Well, where's the harm in that? He merely asked a favour, didn't he?"

"No," Marsh replied. "He demanded it."

"Jim," said Paxton, whirling round in his chair, "you've been here long enough to know that we're trying unselfishly to make Washington the most beautiful city in the world. And we're going to do it. Where's the harm if a few of us, while conferring these great benefits, confer a few on ourselves as a slight recompense for our labours, especially when the improvements we advocate are all in the line of a more liveable and a more beautiful city?"

"If it comes to that I don't suppose there is any harm, but I didn't like the way he did it."

"Oh, forget it! Forget it! That conscience of yours is set on a hair-trigger. There'll be a dividend pretty soon from that Atlas investment. By the way, did you do what he asked you to?"

"Yes," confessed Marsh.

"Well, then, why all this fuss? It's over and no harm's done. There's a man coming in here who wants to meet you."

Marsh read a paper for half an hour and then

a tall, pompous man came in. Senator Paxton introduced him as Mr. William R. Elzey, of New York, receiver for a system of railroads in the Southwest. Mr. Elzey was glad to know Marsh. He had heard about him and had admired his speeches, not only for their oratorical effectiveness, but because of the profound grasp of the law they showed. They discussed legal questions, and Mr. Elzey proved to have much familiarity with the law as well as with big business affairs.

After this general conversation had continued for a time Senator Paxton said: "Elzey, I understand you desire to retain Senator Marsh's services in a purely legal way?"

"Yes," Elzey replied, and he began a long, complicated explanation of how he could use Marsh in a legal capacity as one of the lawyers for him in the affairs of his important receivership. He discussed the matter with Marsh for an hour. Marsh was eager. This gave him an opportunity for making good fees at the legitimate practice of his profession. He went into the situation thoroughly, concluded to take hold of it, and Elzey gave him a cheque for \$10,000 as a retainer. The arrangement was that Marsh was to have this retainer and fifteen hundred dollars a month and expenses. Elzey thought there would not be much necessity for travelling until after Congress adjourned, but he wanted Marsh to represent him in various capacities, both in Washington and in New York, entirely as a lawyer. He made that very clear.

Neither Marsh nor the senator could see any objection, as there was nothing in the receivership that would come before Congress, and Marsh was much elated when he shook hands with Elzey and left him to talk further with Paxton.

"Curious chap that man Marsh," said Paxton to Elzey. "He's a wonder, mentally, so far as big questions go, but the practical side of him is largely undeveloped. He will be a tower of strength to us over here when he gets into the Senate, because he has the gifts to make him invaluable as an advocate for us, to get out in front and explain plausibly to the people what we have in mind. He is one of the most convincing orators I ever heard, and he has a reputation for being upright that will be a great aid to us. He could make a lot of trouble if he were inclined to act on his real impulses, but we have been successful thus far in subduing those impulses. We've got to have him. Dobson is getting old and has all the money he needs, and he's talking about retiring. There isn't a man in sight to be the organisation mouthpiece on the Senate floor except Marsh, and that's why we had you come over here and offer him that retainer. You fellows need him as much as we do."

"I think he can be made extremely useful," said Elzey pompously.

"Surest thing you know," Paxton replied. "If that wife of his persists in her social flight, and we can keep him full of the idea that both her efforts and what we can do for him will land him

far along in power and reputation and wealth, it's easy as eating bread and butter. He is greedy for power and influence and fame. His wife has him buffaloed into thinking her social game helps him. He needs money, and he has been filled to the ears with the information that the only way to get along is to be regular and play the game with the big players. We've pretty nearly landed him, and he will be a most useful asset to our crowd."

Marsh told Mrs. Marsh with great glee of his big retainer and his engagement by Elzey. Mrs. Marsh was delighted. She said she had been certain Marsh could utilise his talents and his legal knowledge if he was of that mind.

A few days later Marsh met Byron. Congress was ending in the usual confusion and tumult. There were early meetings and late sessions and the jam of business was terrific. The newer members had gloomy forebodings that the session would end with a lot of the big appropriation bills not acted upon; but the old hands, who had been through this same mess many times, proceeded calmly, untangling things skilfully and shoving through measures one after another, carrying millions and millions of dollars, with but limited debate but with exact knowledge of what they were doing in each instance. It was merely another exemplification of the expert working of the machine.

"Marsh," said Bryon, "now that you are going

over to the Senate there's one thing I'd advise you to do."

"What's that?" asked Marsh.

"Go into caucus with yourself and determine on your course of action. Intrinsically you are all right. At bottom you are sound, but this gang will get you — if they haven't got you already — if you don't take a brace and look at things squarely."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you are playing this game from the angle of the organisation, that you are getting into that frame of mind where you think it is proper for the organisation to control the people instead of having the people control the organisation. You are coming to think as these robbers think, to act with them, to let them use you instead of standing up and fighting them. They're the greatest bunch of grafters the world has ever known — grafters in a big sense, not door-mat purloiners, you understand. They utilise the organisation for their own political party and personal ends, and they need you to stand up and tell the people that it's all right and that all is quiet and honest along the Potomac.

"I don't mean, Marsh, that most of the men in Congress are not honest, for they are. It has come to be the fashion to laugh at Congress, to scoff at it, to jeer at it; but you know and I know, from our service here, that the aggregate wisdom of these men is great and that their real motives

are patriotic. They are swept along by the cry of loyalty to party, and they have allowed a gang of men to control an organisation that has been falsely held up to be the party itself instead of the creature of the party. They have been fed with the idea that the highest attribute of a legislator, under our party system of government, is to be regular, and instead of being voters they are voted.

“What this gang you are training with is trying to do is to individualise the party, instead of keeping it as the party of the people. It isn't so hard as you think. The people are busy, and these men are apparently working for the good of the party. Having delegated their political authority, the people are looking out for their own affairs. Thus by buying those they have to buy and by cajoling those they can cajole, and by appealing to the fetish of party loyalty and regularity, these few men in the Senate and the House and their associates throughout the country have arrogated to themselves all the powers of the party. They are the party. Their organisation is supreme and the people merely register their desires. They have been a long time building up their machine, but it is about perfected now and they have grabbed you as a necessary feature of it. You have great ability. You can do much, if you will, but what you do, I am afraid, will be done at the direction of these men instead of your own volition. If they haven't landed you, Marsh, they have hooked you, and I know what the bait was.

Shake out the hook before it is too late, for as sure as you are standing there, Marsh, this whole affair will be blown up one of these days and you will all go down in the ruins. The people will revolt as soon as they know the facts, and you can help the few of us who are trying to tell those facts to them, and do good for all, if you will, instead of working in with these robbers and doing what you think is good, but what will really be harmful to yourself."

Marsh laughed. "You've got it pretty bad, Billy," he said.

Byron put out his hand. "Pardon me for being so serious," he said, "but I feel deeply on these matters, and I hate to see a man of your parts going to hell in a hanging basket."

XXIX

“ASK ME AGAIN”

ALTHOUGH Marsh laughed at Byron's warning, he knew there was truth in what he had said, and he resolved to be independent of organisation influences in the Senate, where he was secure for six years, and where he felt he could become so important that he could be re-elected even if the organisation opposed him. He would rely on the people and he would be the people's friend.

The special session opened. There was nothing for the Senate to do, for under the Constitution all revenue bills must originate in the House of Representatives, and the tariff bill must be introduced and passed there before the Senate could take up the matter, except in a preliminary way, in the Finance Committee. Marsh, of course, was not a member of the Finance Committee. He was too new for that. He had been given several committee places, some good, and the chairmanship of a small committee, in order that he might have his perquisites of clerk and messenger and other bits of pap the dignified Senator values so highly. Paxton was on the Finance Committee.

The new session of Congress provided a supplemental social season and Mrs. Marsh continued her activities. Her musical mornings had been a success. She was continually in the social columns of the newspapers, and Dorothy was refusing a few invitations here and there, for Mrs. Marsh felt she had arrived at that distinction where she need not go everywhere but could choose what occasions her presence would honour. Elzey had submitted one or two intricate legal propositions to Marsh, and he spent most of his time on those, while waiting for the actual work to begin in the Senate. Also he familiarised himself to some extent with tariff matters, especially as they related to his own state, and had much correspondence on the subject of wool, beet sugar and other agricultural products. He was a protectionist, of course, but felt that there might advantageously be reductions in certain schedules.

One day he presented his view to Senator Paxton. “Don’t get that bug into your head, Jim,” Paxton advised. “The protective tariff is the mainstay of our country. Also,” and his eyes twinkled, “it is the mainstay of yours truly and many of my associates, and of the organisation that controls our great and glorious party — our Grand Old Party, as we affectionately refer to it for purposes of public consumption. I suppose there will come a day when there will be a tariff bill that is not political but is economic and scientific, but I hope not while I am in the Senate. That would be a calamity, Jim. If we failed to

nurture and protect and otherwise conserve our infant industries, how in blazes could our infant industries nurture and protect and otherwise conserve us? It will be a sad day for us if they take the tariff out of politics or take politics out of the tariff. However, I doubt if there is any immediate danger;" and he laughed.

Mr. Elzey came to town. "Senator Marsh," he asked in a most dignified manner, "do you ever take any interest in financial matters?"

"In what way?" asked Marsh.

"I mean do you ever do anything in the Street?"

"Occasionally," said Marsh, wondering what he had in mind.

"Well, if I were you I would buy a few shares of Q. R. & D. There is likely to be a movement in that stock soon."

Marsh spoke to Rambo about it. "Who told you?" asked Rambo.

"A chap named William R. Elzey."

"Let's go to it!" exclaimed Rambo. "He's one of the big men in the Street, director in I don't know how many corporations. How did you come to know him?"

"I am doing some business for him," said Marsh.

"You don't tell me," said Rambo in evident admiration. "Well, you certainly are in soft if you have that man on your staff."

They bought some Q. R. & D. on joint account, and made enough out of it to enable Marsh to buy

Mrs. Marsh the electric automobile she had been wanting for some time. Also Marsh paid some bills that had been hanging over. Two or three times after that Elzey told Marsh when to buy stocks, and Marsh found Elzey always knew what he was talking about. Moreover, Elzey told Marsh when to sell each time, so he lost nothing by holding on. Marsh came to have a good standing in the offices of the principal brokers in the city and carried an account there. He put in his orders by telephone.

"Jim," said Senator Paxton to Marsh about two weeks before the tariff bill reached the Senate, "brush up on steel and lumber and wool and the chemical schedule."

"Why?" asked Marsh.

"Oh, we're going to have some trouble with these low-tariff people and we'll need some speeches from you for public consumption. Great opportunity for you, my boy! Great opportunity!"

Marsh studied steel and lumber and wool and the chemical schedule. He had a quick mind, knew the rudiments of the tariff, and he felt he would be able to cope with any opposition senator, and show to the public that the wages of our workmen and the prosperity of our people, as well as the very lives of these industries themselves, depended on the retention of a proper measure of protection on them. Paxton thought the old rates or rates a shade higher would suffice.

When the bill reached the Senate there was long

debate. Marsh was put to the front and acquitted himself creditably. One day Elzey came to see him.

"Senator Marsh," he said, "I trust you have given consideration to the absolute necessity of a higher tariff on steel products."

"Higher?" asked Marsh.

"Yes. The industry must perish unless we get a higher measure of protection against foreign competition."

"But," said Marsh, "the Steel Trust sells steel rails in England, delivered, for several dollars less a ton than it sells steel rails at home."

"Oh," said Elzey, waving his hand, "that is an argument of our enemies. It has nothing to do with the case. I am thinking of the American workingman and the American consumer, not of the foreign consumer. I shall hope to hear a speech from you on the subject advocating a higher duty, or rather sustaining the action in that direction I understand the Finance Committee will propose."

Marsh wondered why Elzey was so solicitous about steel; and recalled that he was a consumer of steel rails in his capacity as receiver operating the bankrupt railroad for which Marsh was an attorney. He looked in the Directory of Directors, and discovered that William R. Elzey was a director in twenty-seven corporations, fifteen of them corporations that had direct tariff interests, and were infant industries crying at the door of

the Congress for protection from the cruel attacks of foreign competition and of foreign labour.

There was a long-drawn fight in the Senate in which Marsh was used skilfully. The organisation got what it wanted, except in such cases as it compromised in the conference where the bill went after it had passed the Senate in order that the difference between the Senate and the House might be composed. These compromises had been decided upon before the bill was introduced at all and the duties on the articles compromised were fixed as they had been fixed merely for trading purposes, and in order that the Senate conferees might give in to the House on points the Senate leaders long ago decided to give in on, and thus protect the points they deemed vital to their scheme of profitable protection — profitable to themselves. Marsh's speech on steel was highly complimented by Elzey, who expressed his great gratification and told Marsh of another good thing in Wall Street.

Congress adjourned early in August. Mrs. Marsh and Dorothy had returned to Morganville early in June. Tom Darlington renewed his attentions to Dorothy, and was one day smiled upon, when he was preposterously happy, and the next day treated with cool indifference, when he was preposterously depressed. He was a mercurial young man, was Mr. Darlington, but he was tremendously in love with Dorothy. Besides, he had had a raise in salary, and was sure he was getting

enough to marry on, for, as he had often heard, two can live as cheaply as one.

Mrs. Marsh was too clever to oppose Darlington openly. She knew the usual result of parental opposition in such cases, but she had invited some young people, including Wheeldon, to an elaborate camping party in the mountains, which she was to chaperon, and she had hopes that she might engineer a proposal. Tom Darlington was not invited.

Marsh went to Morganville and opened his law office. He was tired, for the weather in Washington had been atrociously hot, but he had a few important matters to whip into shape for Elzey. He was in a comfortable frame of mind, for he had considerable money ahead and all his bills were paid. Mrs. Marsh was much pleased at his improved financial standing.

The camping party was a social success. Most of those invited from Washington came out, including Wheeldon, who needed a change of air. Matrimonially, however, the party did not amount to much. Mrs. Marsh did her best to pair Dorothy off with Wheeldon on every excursion of exploration, every shooting trip, every horseback ride; and she manœuvred to have her at his side each night when the young people sat around the romantic campfire. She watched the two carefully, but much to her chagrin could discover no signs of affection, or of anything more than a good, live companionship. She resolved to make sterner efforts next winter in Washington,

and contrived to cut the party short by a week on account of illness, which she regretted, but which of course could not be helped.

“I could see no sense of keeping up the expense, inasmuch as neither Dorothy nor that stupid young Wheeldon would fall in love,” she said to Marsh when she returned.

“Fall in love?” repeated Marsh. “Surely you didn’t think you could force a love match out of it.”

“You can never tell,” she replied. “Some times romance crops out in unexpected places. But next winter it shall be brought about.”

“For Heaven’s sake, Molly,” protested Marsh, “give Dorothy a chance. She doesn’t want to marry that young squirt.”

“She doesn’t know what she does want, nor do you,” said Mrs. Marsh. “But I know what is best for her and for us.”

Tom Darlington had wandered about Morganville during the camping party like a lost soul. Life had no joy for him, for he was sure Dorothy would come back engaged to somebody. He didn’t know which one of the young men it would be, and he had visions of all of them proposing to her in relays, so obsessed was he of her charms. One moment he was certain one of them would win her, the next he assured himself that she would repulse them all. He brooded over the situation until his brain refused to work, and he took long, lonely rides in his motorboat, relieving

his feelings by driving that inoffensive structure to the full limit of its speed.

As a return for the camping entertainment, which had proved a very enjoyable outing, the girls in the party invited Dorothy to come east in the latter part of August and join a houseparty at Watch Hill. Mrs. Marsh was delighted, because young Wheeldon was to be one of the party. When he learned of these plans Tom Darlington contemplated suicide and other rash things, but finally compromised on asking Dorothy to take a ride with him in his motorboat.

Dorothy did not tell her mother of this invitation, which she had accepted with alacrity much to Tom's surprise. Tom proved himself a moody and distraught companion. He talked little and tinkered much with his engine.

"You are not very amiable," pouted Dorothy.

"Who could be amiable with you running round after that young fool of a Wheeldon?" inquired Tom sulkily.

"Why, Tom Darlington, that's a story. I haven't been running round after Mr. Wheeldon. We're just good friends, that's all."

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" exclaimed Tom; "with you going camping with him, and now going off to some party in Rhode Island where he will be constantly with you."

"I couldn't help going camping with him and you know it," protested Dorothy. "Mamma fixed that up. And why shouldn't I go down East and have some fun, I should like to know?"

"Why not?" inquired Tom with elaborate sarcasm. "Of course I don't count. And why should I when there's a millionaire's son round?"

"Don't talk that way, Tom," pleaded Dorothy, "you know it isn't so."

"How do I know it isn't so?" he asked, seeing his advantage and pressing it. "What encouragement have you ever given me, I'd like to know?"

Dorothy did not give him any answer for some moments, then looking up at him shyly, with eyes that smiled into his, she put her little hand into his big grimy one. "Do you want to marry me, Tom?" she asked.

"Do I want to marry you?" shouted Tom. "Do I want to marry you? Why, Dorothy, I've asked you a hundred times."

"Well," she laughed, blushing and moving off a little, "why not ask me again?"

In one bound Tom was on his knees besides her, both her hands crushed in his, his honest eyes pleading up at her. "Will you?" he said. "Will you, sweetheart? Oh, I love you, Dorothy. I love you! I love you!"

And then, because he read her answer in her eyes, he kissed her.

Fifteen minutes later the boat ran up against the bank and grounded there. But the young people in the stern sat on undisturbed.

XXX

THE WEDDING

DOROTHY was the first to realise that it was growing late. For the next half hour Tom struggled in mud and slime, his shoes and stockings off and his trousers rolled up to his knees, to get the boat's nose off the shore. She had bumped on firmly, although the engine had been at low speed and the boat going slowly when she ran ashore, and for some time Tom shoved and pulled with no result. Dorothy watched his struggles with concern at times and laughing unconcern at other times. Finally the boat was afloat again, and Tom headed for home at top speed, for it was getting late.

On the way they planned their future. Their engagement, they decided, should be kept secret until Dorothy came of age, and then they would be married whether Mrs. Marsh consented or not. Dorothy saw Tom twice more before she left for Watch Hill and promised faithfully to write to him every day.

"Write something," pleaded Tom; "even if it's just 'I love you,' it will help."

But Dorothy, who liked to write, did better

than that. She sent Tom long letters, full of comment on the fashionable affairs she attended and the fashionable folk she saw, but always there was a last paragraph that Tom read first; in which she told him sweetly and sincerely that she loved him. And young Darlington spent all his spare time writing to Dorothy. He threw aside the news and gossip of Morganville as unworthy of his attention, and devoted himself to impressing on her the depth and enduring qualities of his love. He used up every simile for eternity and durability, and every word of endearment that he could think of, and ransacked love stories for new terms in which to express his adoration. One day Dorothy was astonished to receive a transcription of the love letter in Marion Crawford's *Dr. Claudius*, modified to suit Morganville and Darlington conditions, but breathing all the passion of that remarkable epistle. Tom was putting his whole soul into his writing, as well as the souls of other writers, and Dorothy thought his letters wonderful. She decided that when they were married he must try to write a novel.

Young Wheeldon was at the Watch Hill house-party, but quite unconscious of Mrs. Marsh's designs on him. He took Dorothy as his partner when it was his turn, and was polite and affable, but nothing more. Dorothy went with one young man and another and had a good time. She was in Morganville for a few weeks before she and her mother went to Washington to open the house, and spent most of her time devising ways

and means to see Tom, which was becoming more and more difficult. Mrs. Marsh had suspicions concerning him and she voiced them once or twice, but Dorothy fibbed prettily, and did her best to put her mother's mind at rest. She did not quite succeed, however, and Mrs. Marsh left for Washington determined to do her utmost to push the Wheeldon alliance.

The session passed quickly and rather quietly. Mrs. Marsh gave several distinguished entertainments, and succeeded in pruning a few more undesirables from her list and adding a few more desirables. Marsh made two great speeches upholding organisation contentions, and was a most conspicuous senator despite his short service. Ordinarily a new senator is not active or considered of much importance for a year or two after his advent in that dignified upper house, and usually the older senators resent it if he is; but it was different in the case of Marsh and had been from the start. The organisation had to have Marsh, for they needed his talents as an advocate, the old wheel-horse Dodson, who had been put up for the work Marsh was doing for ten or fifteen years, having retired. So Marsh, instead of remaining in obscurity for his year or two, came to the front at once, thereby gaining much newspaper acclaim as a rising young statesman who had risen through sheer ability as soon as he had an opportunity.

Marsh realised perfectly well that he would have been one of the rank and file for two or three

sessions at least without organisation support, albeit he might have forced himself to the front on independent lines, for every senator can do exactly what he pleases in that regard. However, he liked the comment. It pleased him to hear some one say: "There goes Senator Marsh, the great orator," as he passed a group of tourists. And he took his orders and played his part and reaped his rewards. He was well in the confidence of the leaders. The Senate oligarchy, headed by one great, powerful, masterful man, had five other members. Next to these came the men like Marsh, who were of but not exactly in that governing board, and after these the senators who voted as they were told and demanded their share of whatever was going.

Marsh had supreme faith in his abilities, and in the place he could command for himself, and looked forward to being the real leader, or, if not that, at least to having a place in the innermost circle. Elzey was liberal with market information. The Atlas Land Company paid a good dividend. Paxton engineered one or two other schemes and Marsh made money, and began the recess with forty or fifty thousand dollars clear. He wanted to be rich. He wanted to be independent. He tried to argue himself into the feeling that when he had enough money he could be independent, but he knew better, for every dollar he made was an added link in the chain that bound him to the leaders who were using him for their own purposes.

Mrs. Marsh pursued Wheeldon assiduously. She set snares of all sorts for him, but that wary young man was not to be caught, nor did Dorothy help her mother in the slightest degree. She was polite to Wheeldon, just as she was polite to all other amiable young men, and every day she wrote at least one letter to Tom Darlington.

Late that summer Mrs. Marsh had her suspicions concerning Tom Darlington confirmed. Being a wise and clever woman, she said nothing, for she knew that if she openly opposed the match the probabilities were that Dorothy and Tom would run away and get married, and that was the last thing she wanted. She waited until she returned to Washington in the fall, when she mapped out a new line of campaign. She would drop Wheeldon, she decided, and centre her efforts on a young Englishman named Vickers, of good family and with money, who was spending the winter in Washington and had the advantage of Embassy introductions. The Englishman was slow of wit, and he was amazed at the attentions showered upon him by Mrs. Marsh, who exerted herself to be most attractive whenever he was in her company. Dorothy for her part paid scant attention to him or to her mother's change of tactics. Her mind was full of many things those days, things that had to do with an approaching birthday and a piece of news that would soon be made public.

One night, at a dinner for the young people given by Mrs. Marsh in honour of two or three

of the most fashionable buds of that season, the young Englishman, who had been manœuvred into almost exclusive company with Dorothy by the extremely capable Mrs. Marsh, revolted and went home as soon as he could with propriety. Dorothy had no part in this, but Mrs. Marsh thought she had.

"Dorothy," she said that night when the guests had left, "I consider your conduct this evening quite inexcusable."

"What do you mean, mother?" asked Dorothy, amazed.

"I mean that you are defying my expressed wishes by snubbing that poor Mr. Vickers to-night. He was so uncomfortable that he left before any of the others."

"What a calamity!" murmured Dorothy.

"Dorothy," said Mrs. Marsh coldly, "I cannot understand your attitude in this matter. You know it is your duty to marry a man who can offer you both position and wealth, not only for your own sake, but for your father's and mine as well. I have spent much time and effort in having you meet desirable young men and giving you an opportunity to see something of them, and you have done absolutely nothing to help me." Then, overcome apparently at the thought of her daughter's ingratitude, Mrs. Marsh indulged in a few tears.

Dorothy steeled herself for the encounter. She realised that the time had come to have things out with her mother.

"But, mother," she explained, "I do not want to marry Mr. Vickers any more than I wanted to marry Mr. Wheeldon, and neither Mr. Vickers nor Mr. Wheeldon has the slightest desire to marry me. And besides — mother, dear, I am engaged already." Her heart was beating furiously as she spoke, but she tried very hard to appear calm.

For a moment Mrs. Marsh was too dumbfounded to speak. Then:

"You are engaged?" she repeated blankly, her voice trailing off to a wail. "To whom?"

"Tom Darlington."

Mrs. Marsh once more resorted to tears, but from behind the handkerchief that she pressed to her face she eyed Dorothy narrowly to see how much in earnest she was. That young woman sat straight in her chair, looking proud, defiant and very indignant.

"There's no use making a scene, mother," she announced. "I love him and I'm going to marry him, whether you like it or not." That ended the interview.

When he got home that night Marsh found his wife in her room, sobbing nervously, her maid bathing her temples with cologne. He knew something had happened, but couldn't imagine what it was, and after some tender sympathy and a few discreet and tactful assurances of his love and support, went to his own room to await the developments of the morning.

Next morning Mrs. Marsh was pale but calm.

She had her breakfast in her room, as was her custom, and sent her maid to ask Marsh if he would come to her at ten o'clock. She was reclining in a big chair in most becoming negligee when Marsh came in.

"What is it, dear?" he asked tenderly, for he saw at once that something was really on her mind.

"Oh, James," she said, on the verge of tears again, "Dorothy is engaged!"

"Good!" exclaimed Marsh. "I'm glad of it! Who is the lucky chap?"

Mrs. Marsh changed immediately into the socially ambitious woman.

"I regret your attitude," she said icily. "I had great plans for Dorothy, great ambitions. I sought to make her one of the social leaders of Washington. I desired her to take her proper place in exclusive circles, and now she tells me she intends to marry a common railroad employé of no family and no wealth."

"Tom Darlington?" asked Marsh.

"Yes."

"But, Molly, Tom Darlington is from one of the best families in New England, although he was born in the West, and he will have plenty of money some day. Besides, he's an honest, manly young fellow and he is a comer in the railroad world."

Mrs. Marsh listened intently. "You don't mean to say he is of the Darlington family of Massachusetts?" she asked.

"David Darlington is his grandfather."

"And that family has money?"

"No end of it."

Mrs. Marsh sighed. "Well," she said, "perhaps it isn't so bad as I feared. Leave me now, James, I must think things out."

Marsh kissed her and went out. He found Dorothy downstairs, pale and anxious.

"Oh, popsie," she said, "have you seen —"

"I have," he answered, "and cheer up, it will all come out right!"

"What did you tell her?"

"I told her that young man of yours isn't a half bad chap, and a lot of other things. You go to her later in the day and cuddle her a little, and you'll find she'll not only consent, but will give you a wedding that will make the eyes of these other girls pop right out on their cheeks."

It was three o'clock that afternoon before Mrs. Marsh and Dorothy had their meeting. In the meantime Mrs. Marsh had had her hair dressed, her manicure and her masseuse had been in, and she was ready for her day. She sent for Dorothy, who had been wandering about the house and had written three letters to Tom, telling him in the first one that possibly she would telegraph him to come and get her; in the next begging him to dismiss any such preposterous idea from his mind, and in the third asking him on what train he would arrive.

The interview went off much better than Dorothy had dared to hope. Mrs. Marsh was gentle

and considerate, and after half an hour's talk consented to the match. Whereupon Dorothy sent the butler scurrying to the telegraph office with a telegram to Tom, which read:

Why don't you hurry? Love. DOROTHY.

This message threw young Darlington into ecstasies of delight and paroxysms of woe simultaneously, for he fancied all manner of things, from a demand on Dorothy's part for an elopement, to a plot by Mrs. Marsh to marry her daughter by force to one of her social favourites. He took the first train to Washington and Dorothy met him at the station. Mrs. Marsh was cordial in a reserved manner, and questioned him at length about his family connections and financial expectations, and in due course gave an elaborate party for Dorothy at which her engagement was announced.

Mrs. Marsh prepared the press notices of the party that appeared in the society columns. She gave a detailed list of those present, spoke of the many flowers and engagement presents received, and conferred on the world this information concerning Mr. Thomas Darlington, the prospective groom: "Mr. Thomas Darlington, who is to marry Miss Marsh, is a direct descendant of the David Darlingtons of Massachusetts, an old and wealthy family. Mr. Darlington is by profession a civil engineer, and at present holds a responsible position with the R. R. & T. Railroad. He has

a wide reputation among railroad officials as one of the leaders in his profession and undoubtedly has a brilliant career before him." Tom Darlington whistled when he read that, but Dorothy put her arms round his neck and whispered: "Why not?"

The wedding was noteworthy even for Washington weddings. The president and his wife went to the church ceremony and sent a big bouquet of flowers from the White House conservatories to the bride. The president's daughter was at the breakfast reception, as was nearly all of Washington's best official, diplomatic, army, navy and residential society. The papers gave half a column to the affair, with pictures of the bride and groom, and Mrs. Marsh, although she could not help regretting that the groom was not Wheeldon or Vickers or perhaps an officer in the army or navy, was reasonably content. If there had remained any doubt in the mind of any person as to her social status, the list of guests at the church, the breakfast and the reception must have convinced the sceptical that she had arrived.

When Marsh was looking over her lists of guests he saw the name of the former Cabinet woman who had snubbed Mrs. Marsh in her first season. This woman had left Washington when her husband retired from office, but was spending the winter there.

"Goodness, Molly," said Marsh, "you are not going to ask that woman, are you? She's the one

who snubbed you back in the old Bruxton Hotel days."

"Certainly I shall invite her," answered Mrs. Marsh. "She is very important socially, and I don't intend any one to remember I ever had any Bruxton Hotel days."

XXXI

A VISION OF POWER

THE next three years passed uneventfully. The political firm of Paxton and Marsh maintained its supremacy in the state, Paxton was re-elected for his third term, and Marsh grew in reputation throughout the country as a great orator. There had been mention of him as his party's candidate for president. Marsh was rapidly becoming invaluable to the Senate oligarchy and he reaped a big reward. At the suggestion of Elzey he accepted a large retainer from special interests for the purpose of defeating legislation. Elzey had been discharged as receiver of the railroad and Marsh's fee terminated, but he had been given, at the suggestion of Paxton and some other friends in the Senate, a considerable sum by a combination of railroads for the purpose of holding up proposed legislation to compel the railroad to put on steel mail-cars instead of the flimsy wooden ones they were running, and the public was behind this bill, for the slaughter of mail clerks in wrecks is appalling. Marsh held up this legislation for several years. His activities extended in various directions. At first Paxton made no suggestion

of division, but one day he said he thought that inasmuch as he was the business producer and Marsh the practicing lawyer in the combination, he deserved half the spoils. Marsh readily agreed to this. He was making money fast and he knew his obligations to Paxton.

Tom Darlington had been made division engineer, and he and Dorothy had moved to the city fifty miles from Morganville, which was the division headquarters. They had a baby boy, the idol of Marsh, who, much to her husband's disgust, insisted that Dorothy spend much of her time in Washington, so that he might be near the baby. Mrs. Marsh continued on her social way. She was one of the leaders and she was most exclusive. She had none but the most fashionable people at her numerous entertainments, and her dinners were celebrated throughout Washington, not only for the extremely smart character of the guests, but for the excellence of the food and wines. Furthermore, she had arrived at that stage of eminence wherein the society reporters sought her favour for news. She was no longer compelled to go after them.

At the beginning of Marsh's fourth year in the Senate he was worth two hundred thousand dollars. No suspicion had attached to his name. He was hailed throughout the country as a sturdy party man of extraordinary ability as a speaker, and he was in demand in political campaigns and at big dinners in New York and elsewhere. At the same time there had spread throughout the

country a feeling of discontent, expertly fostered by men in Washington who knew the real conditions. The men in control of the Republican party had used that party so long to their own selfish ends they had become arrogant and flown with power. They refused to listen to the protest of the people. A revolt that threatened to become a revolution was in progress, but they would have none of the news of it, so secure did they feel in their position entrenched behind the interests they represented. They thought money would be all potent, as it always had been, in maintaining their supremacy in the elections, and their arrogance led them to newer and greater abuses of their power and their disregard of the people.

One night early in April Marsh went out for a walk. He passed by the White House and stopped to look at the south portico of that beautiful building. There was a full moon. The magnolias and the other flowering trees shimmered in its light. The big fountain sent up spurts of gleaming water that fell back in glittering spray. The grass was green and fresh and velvety, and through this perspective he saw the great portico, with its gleaming pillars, and the lanterns on either side. Back of him the monument towered into the soft air, its grey sides softly reflecting subdued tints, and far behind the dome of the Capitol swam indistinct in the silver haze.

Marsh gazed at this wonderful picture — there is not another in the world like it — and his thoughts ran back to the night when he first stood

there and wondered if he might not one day live in that house and direct affairs of the people of his country. Why not? He was gaining fame. He was getting to be a party leader. He had every qualification and especially every political qualification. He was entranced by the glory of the scene, and again he seemed to hear the bands playing Hail to the Chief as they passed him on Pennsylvania Avenue on the fourth of March, while he bowed his acknowledgments as the newly-elected president, Mrs. Marsh beside him radiant with happiness.

A man touched him on the shoulder. Marsh started and turned around.

"Hello, senator."

"Why, how do you do, Byron. I haven't seen you in a long time.

"No," Byron replied, "we are not travelling the same roads just now. Isn't it a wonderful picture?"

"Wonderful!"

"But think of the troubles of the poor chap who lives there, the rock — if he is a rock — against which every selfish ambition, every political intrigue, every job is hurled, and against whose peace of mind and future every political jobster is plotting. Or if he isn't a rock, the poor, helpless, hopeless man, snared by the system and the creature of those who surround him and who snared him. It is a tremendous responsibility, and how few of them measure up to it."

"Byron," said Marsh, "what did you mean just

now when you said you and I are not travelling the same roads. Of course I am in the Senate and you are still in the House, but that doesn't explain it. What did you mean?"

Byron laughed. "You know what I mean, senator, as well as I do, but I'll tell you if you want to know."

"I do want to know."

"Well, I mean just this: You and I began in Congress in the same term. You have gone ahead of me of course, and that is right enough, for you are a man of greater ability than I, but, believe me, Marsh, my time is coming. You have seen fit to ally yourself with the interest-controlled organisation and to disregard, except for purposes of deceiving them, the people to whom you are responsible. We are playing different games, Marsh. You have taken one end and I have taken the other. You have chosen to be with the classes, as represented by their tools in this Congress, and I have chosen to be with the people. Your apparent advantage is great, but the time isn't far away when the people you have left will rise and throw you all out of power."

"Pshaw, Byron," interrupted Marsh, "that sounds like one of your speeches in the House."

"It is one of my speeches in the House," answered Byron, "and it is one of my speeches to the people. As surely as there is a God in Heaven, Marsh, this revolt, this demand for readjustment, will bring you all to your knees. You can't escape it. It is bound to come. You

have grown arrogant, despotic, un-American even in your studied and selfish crusade for power and for money. I mean all of you, not you alone. You have sought to make our party a party of individuals instead of a party of the people. You have delivered us over into the hands of the trusts, the monopolies, the combinations that are destroying or have destroyed competition and are making the burdens of life unbearable. You have refused to hear the warnings. You are deaf to the entreaties of the people. You laugh at the protests of men like myself, scoff at us, call us socialists and anarchists and enemies of the existing order.

"Great Heavens, man, why shouldn't we be enemies of the existing order? What is the existing order but the absolute control of this Government by a few financial pirates who have used you for their own ends; and have throttled the people of this country with trusts, combinations and with other financial and business iniquities? What is it if it isn't that? Of course we are enemies of the existing order, and mark me, senator, the existing order will be toppled over one of these days, your party will be wrecked and ruined, and you will have nothing to mark your past by but your money, and that will not be a subject of grateful remembrance, if I am any judge."

Marsh listened impatiently. "I don't want to be rude, Byron," he said, "but it seems to me you are going a bit beyond the limit in your tirade."

"Nor do I want to be rude," continued Byron, "but facts are always rude. I am speaking to you now because I still have faith in you, because I know what you were thinking when I came along here. I know you were gazing at the White House, and fancying yourself the president chosen by the people to live within its walls. I know what your dreams are, but I'll tell you, Marsh, those dreams will never come true. You will never get to the White House unless you cut loose from these wolves who are using you and your fine ability for their own purposes. You'll go down with the rest. Why not be a man instead of a tool? Why not be one of the people and for the people, instead of flouting the people and using them for your own selfish ends? There's a day of reckoning coming, Marsh. It may not be this year or next year, but it is coming. And you will all go down. It isn't too late for you, Marsh. You have power. The people still believe in you. They do not know your connections as we know them here. They think you are a great man, partisan, perhaps, but intrinsically honest, and you can still cut loose and go out and make a fight for popular government, for the rule of the people instead of the rule of the system. You can do it if you wish, Marsh. It is up to you."

"Good-night," said Marsh abruptly, and walked away.

He did not go to bed until four o'clock next morning. He sat in his library and thought of

what Byron had said. He considered Byron a fanatic, a crusader who saw visions and dreamed dreams, but in his heart he knew Byron was right. He had felt many times the humiliation of his position. He had taken orders like the veriest attendant, orders to do thus and so issued arrogantly by the Senate leaders. To be sure he had profited by these orders, but that added to the humiliation, for even his motives were dishonest. Before morning he had resolved to cut loose. He had planned his campaign. He had decided to be a man, no matter what the consequences might be; but as he reviewed his career and his connections he was uneasy. Perhaps he could not. That thought constantly obtruded. He swept it away with a fine determination to cut loose no matter what the cost to himself. He knew his own ability. He saw himself in the Senate making his declaration of emancipation, espousing the cause of the people. He felt instinctively there would be a wide popular acclaim, and the vision of the bands playing Hail to the Chief on Pennsylvania Avenue on March fourth, while he bowed his acknowledgments from the reviewing stand in front of the White House, came back to him.

He stayed at home that morning and planned his campaign. The House had passed a corporation-tax bill, taxing corporations on their gross revenues, that had been fought bitterly in secret by the organisation and the interests, but which they had been obliged to send to a vote and obliged

to vote for because of the popular demand they could not resist. The interests were outraged by the bill. They protested it was confiscatory, unconstitutional, un-American, and they rallied every friend they had against it, but to no avail. The people demanded it. The people were beginning to have an inkling of what had happened to them in years gone by.

So they let the bill go through the House and plotted to kill it or emasculate it in the Senate. One plan was to increase the tax in the Senate to an absurdly high figure and refuse to compromise in conference and then kill the bill; and the other was for the Finance Committee of the Senate, when it received the bill from the House, to strike out all but the enacting clause, substitute an entirely new bill, pass that bill, and send the two bills to conference, where the conferees would be carefully picked men and where they could cook up a new bill that would be harmless, while appearing to carry out the will of the people. This latter plan was most favoured, because the mere change of the rate of taxation in the House Bill by the Senate meant, under the laws of conference, that the conferees could confer and decide only on the items changed, and must not change any sections that had passed both House and Senate in exact form. That is, if the House fixed five per cent. and the Senate amended to ten per cent. as the rate of the tax, the conferees could deal only with the rate and not with the wording of the bill,

unless that had been changed from House verbiage by Senate amendment also.

The decision was to have the Senate strike out all but the enacting clause in the House bill, substitute its own bill, and thresh it out in conference, where the organisation would see to it that competent threshers were on guard. Elzey told Marsh, and so did Paxton, that Marsh must lead the fight for this procedure. The organisation had picked trusty men for conferees and the presiding officers had their instructions to name these men. The chairman of the Finance Committee was an adroit floor leader, but the public feeling was so intense that a great speech was needed and Marsh was told off to make this speech.

Marsh knew the House bill was equitable. His plan was to make his great speech, but not in defence of the Senate procedure, and the consequent emasculation in conference he knew would ensue. He had been party to conferences before. He knew how adroitly new law was made by conferees, how provisions were changed and bills denatured by these skilful legislators, and his idea, which was firmly fixed in his mind, was to advocate the passage by the Senate of the House bill instead of the substitution of the Senate bill. He planned to offer the House bill as a substitute for the Senate bill and make his fight on that. He knew he would have some Senate support and wide popular acclaim, for he intended to expose the Senate scheme and to demand the House bill as

a fair and righteous measure, giving the people a tithe of their dues and mulcting the interests and the system.

"Jim," said Paxton to him a few days before the matter came up, "are you getting ready for that corporation-tax speech?"

"Yes," Marsh replied.

"Going to be a hummer, I hope. It's a great chance for you. We've got it all fixed to submit our own bill in place of the House bill, and throw it into conference, and what those able seamen who will be on that conference committee will do to that corporation-tax business will be a plenty. They'll mess it up so the Supreme Court won't get it untangled in a dozen years."

"Will the people stand for it?" asked Marsh.

"They've got to stand for it. We've got the votes roped and tied in the Senate to pass it, and the conferees will hold out and make a false fight until within a few hours of adjournment. Then we'll report an agreement, and shove it gracefully through in the crowded last moments before anybody knows what is in it. After that the people can gnaw on it as long as they like. Of course as soon as an attempt is made to collect a tax under it a test case will be brought by some of our friends, and by the time the Supreme Court passes on it we can have some other scheme fixed up. The people? Say, Jim, you don't think the people have a look in on this game, do you?"

"I suppose not," said Marsh gravely, "but I think I shall try to enlighten them."

"You'll do what?" shouted Paxton.

"I shall support the House bill."

Paxton looked at him in amazement.

"That's what I shall do," repeated Marsh.

"Yes you will," said Paxton. "Oh, yes, I can see you doing it! Quit your joking now and go and get ready for your speech."

"I am not joking. I intend to advocate the House rate and the House bill."

Paxton smiled incredulously. "Say, Jim," he said, "you haven't been drinking, have you?"

"No."

"Then you must be crazy."

"I'm neither crazy nor drunk. I tell you I am convinced my duty is to prevent this juggling with the rights of the people. It has got to stop. Hereafter I am going to fight for the men who send me here, not for the men I met after I got here. It's all settled. I am against you and your gang from this time out. I have declared my independence. I am a free man, and I'll fight you to the finish, in this and in every other rotten scheme you try to sneak through."

"Do you mean it?" asked Paxton, still incredulous.

"I mean it. More than that, I swear it."

Paxton whistled, walked round the room, lighted a cigar with elaborate care. "The trouble with you is that you've lost your sense of perspective," he remarked.

"On the contrary," asserted Marsh, "I've just found it."

“Oh, hell,” exclaimed Paxton, “there’s no use arguing with a crazy man! I’ll attend to you in a day or so if you don’t get back to normal. Good-morning.”

XXXII

SHACKLED OR THE END OF THE DREAM

PAXTON went up to Marsh's house that night and came away convinced Marsh was in earnest. He found it useless to talk to Marsh, that he obstinately refused to listen to reason, nor would he heed threats. He said he had decided to cast his lot with the people and he had faith the people would welcome him. He would expose the whole scheme in the Senate and he knew he could arouse the country. So did Paxton know he could arouse the country. Paxton had an acute realisation of that fact, and he had an inkling of the temper of the people, for he was an able politician and kept somewhat in touch with the West and the Middle-West, where the revolt was assuming proportions. He consulted with the other Senate leaders. They canvassed the situation carefully.

"Paxton," said the real leader; "we can't afford to have this happen. Put the screws on him."

Two days later, while Marsh sat at work on his speech in his committee room, the card of William R. Elzey was brought in by his messenger.

"Ask him to come in," Marsh directed.

Elzey appeared. "Ah, good-morning, senator," he said. "I am delighted to see you again. Charming weather, isn't it? I hope you are well and I must say you are looking very fit."

Marsh smiled a little at this, for he was pale and worn, with great hollows under his eyes. He had slept little, and he was working hard on what was to be the greatest speech of his life.

"Good-morning, Mr. Elzey. Won't you sit down?"

They chatted a moment on inconsequential things. Then Elzey cleared his throat portentously. "Senator," he said, "what is this amazing thing I hear about you?"

"I can't imagine. What is it?"

"Why — of course it is absurd — but I hear, from what is usually good authority — although my informants must be mistaken, as I told them — I hear you intend to oppose the Senate plan as regards the iniquitous corporation tax and support the criminally oppressive House measure."

"That is correct."

"But, senator, you cannot be serious. All of your friends and associates in New York — and I think you will admit we are entitled, for substantial reasons, to claim friendship — are opposed to this measure as it stands. All of your associates in the Senate are opposed to it. It is a mere anarchistic vagary of the uninformed people. It is confiscatory. It deprives the men who have built up this country of the fruits of their honest endeavour, of their knowledge, their

capital, their enterprise. I can show you, if you will allow me, the dozen iniquities that exist in it."

"That would be useless," said Marsh firmly.

"Useless? Surely you will listen to reason?"

"I have determined on my course."

"But my dear senator, you cannot do this thing. It is impossible and preposterous."

"I fail to see why it is impossible. I have the right of speech in the Senate. I am a free man. I can say what I choose and I have my convictions in the matter. Why is it impossible?"

"Because —" Elzey dropped his affability and became imperative, his eyes, grey and hard, drilled into Marsh, his voice was harsh and commanding. "Because I forbid it."

"You forbid it!" shouted Marsh. "You — forbid — it! Get out of this office before I throw you out! You — forbid — it! And who are you — who are you to forbid my doing my duty?"

"You know who I am. If you do not I shall be at pains to refresh your memory. I forbid it, I say, and I have the power to do so."

Marsh dropped back in his chair. "I don't understand," he said weakly.

"You will in a minute. Do you suppose I — we — my associates and myself — intend to allow you to cut our throats in this manner?"

"You —"

Marsh paused. His mind flashed back over all his congressional career. He saw it all. These

men intended to coerce him because he had taken money from them. Hot blood rushed to his face. His heart thumped. He saw dimly. The big, impressive figure of Elzey swayed in a mist before him. His temples throbbed. His hands clasped and unclasped. He started forward as if to strike Elzey, who sat watching him with a cruel smile on his lips.

"I defy you!" shouted Marsh. "I defy you! You can prove nothing. I have given services for all the money you have paid me, you or any other person. I defy you! I shall oppose the bill, and I'll beat it, too, and show up your sneaking, scheming pirates to the whole world!"

"You will do no such thing," said Elzey quietly.

"Why won't I, damn you? Why won't I? You can't stop me with any of your cheap, blackmailing threats. I defy you!"

"You'd best be calm, Marsh. You cannot frighten me. Don't call me a blackmailer and a thief. Think about yourself. Keep your epithets for yourself. What you say about me concerns me little. I am used to dealing with men of your class."

"Of my class?" gasped Marsh.

"Exactly. I have been buying such men as you for many years. I bought you, Marsh, and you will not oppose that bill."

"By God I will!" shouted Marsh. "I'll beat it if I go to hell for it."

"No," replied Elzey, still calm, "you will not beat it. You will continue in the Senate, do as I

wish, and be a respectable and respected member of that great body."

Marsh was trembling. His nerves, already wrought to high tension, were breaking a little. "How can you stop me?" he asked. "I tell you I have made up my mind."

Elzey took a bundle of papers from his pocket. They were canceled bank cheques.

"Marsh," he said, "here is every cheque you have received from us — from me and my associates. Cheques with your indorsement on them, cheques issued by various firms and corporations in New York. I have them all. You are more of a simpleton than most men of your class, Marsh. You don't even know enough to demand currency. You took cheques. And here they are, the proof of all your crookedness."

Marsh's face was ghastly as Elzey spread the cheques out before him. They were all there including the first ones from Stunz & Sturgess, and the cheque for \$25,000 used in beating him for election as senator. Marsh put a shaking finger on the first cheque he had received.

"Where did you get that?" he asked hoarsely.

"Why, Quicksall gave it to me. We all operate together in cases of this kind, my dear senator. Are you not aware of that?"

Elzey spread the cheques out again. "Look them over," he said. "You admit your signatures?"

"What are you going to do with them?"

"Nothing," said Elzey, gathering them up;

"nothing if you recant on this foolish and inexpedient idea of yours and fall in line for our plan as to this tax. If you persist in your foolishness I shall arrange to have these cheques placed in the hands of various New York newspapers. The exposure won't hurt us, Marsh, for the people could not hate us any more than they do, but it will ruin you, Marsh, and it will ruin your wife and your daughter."

"Is it possible," Marsh cried, "that you would do that?"

Elzey smiled. "My 'dear senator," he said, "stop and consider what you are preparing to do to us. We must fight fire with fire."

Marsh paced back and forth across the room. "It is quite true," he cried. "I am not a free man, not a real man. I am merely the tool of you and your associates, a violator of my oath of office, an ingrate to the people who have honoured me."

"Oh, senator," protested Elzey, "I think you are a little too hard on yourself."

Marsh did not appear to hear what the other man was saying: "I am bound," he repeated as though speaking to himself, "shackled, fettered, and all for what? For petty place, for fleeting fame, for gratification of my vanity, for cursed, rotten money. Oh, my God! my God!" He threw himself forward on his desk, his head buried in his arms, his body shaken with great sobs.

Elzey sat watching him. After some moments Marsh looked up.

"Of course, senator," said Elzey, "the incident is closed, I take it, and you are with us."

Marsh looked vacantly at him.

"I am to understand then," repeated Elzey, "that you will consider the incident closed and that you will support our contention. Am I correct?"

Marsh slowly nodded his head. "Yes," he whispered, "you are entirely correct."

"Good-morning," said Elzey. "I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again soon, I trust. Good-morning."

Long after his visitor had left him, Marsh sat there, staring at the wall. Again he had a vision of the bands playing Hail to the Chief on Pennsylvania Avenue, and the crowds cheering the man who stood in the reviewing stand on the fourth of March and bowed his happy acknowledgments. But this time the man in the reviewing stand was not James Marsh.

THE END





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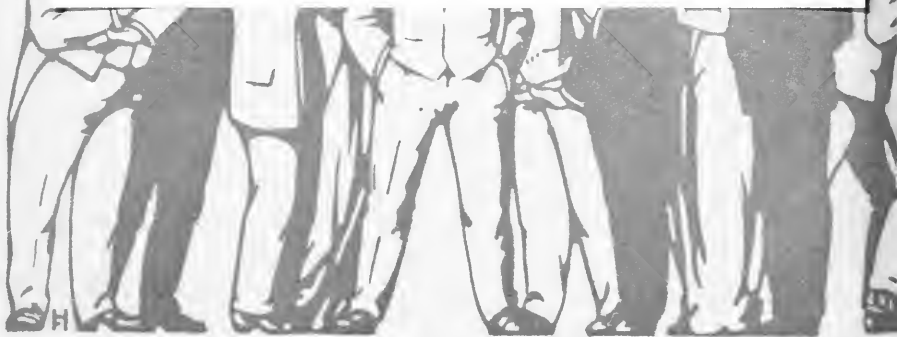
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